

# U9

# Fundamental Stage Coaches Manual

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 U9 players. Some parents will have expectations that their children will all be able play the game like a world champion when they are finished this winter 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 etc
- Snack schedule
- \* On ice helpers

# COACHING THE U9 PLAYER:

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## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE U9 PLAYER:

- Still figuring out the fundamental athletic skills
- Your players will be very active and not want to stand still for too long
- Short attention span
- Sensitive to criticism, always be positive.
- Players this age like to be complimented and recognized
- Enjoy gymnastic type activities
- Heavily influenced by role models, or rather parents, teachers, and coaches
- They are naturally egocentric so keep the team concept quite basic

At this age, Ringette is still about having fun. Coaches should encourage players to be actively involved in the game. By this point in their development, players will begin to remember what they learned the previous day or at the most recent practice. What they will not be able to do is consistently perform what they learned. This is important to remember so that you don't lose patience in their inability to consistently perform a desired technique.

Much like coaching the U6 players, it is your job to create a fun and safe environment. While we will now begin to move towards Ringette specific skills such as checking and shooting, your practices should still emphasize the ABCs of movement:

- Agility
- Balance,
- Co-ordination
- Speed

# SKILL BENCHMARKS

As important to the introduction to Ringette that you will now present, it is essential to cover the basic athletic or sports skills:

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

### Basic Skating Skills:

- Basic stance
- Falling and getting up
- Edges, balance on skates
- Start and Stop
- Forward and Backward stride
- Glide
- Speed

### Basic Ring Skills:

- Grip
- Carry the ring
- Passing and Receiving
- Checking
- Shooting
- All within a controlled environment

### Introduce Goalkeeping:

- Introduce concept and rotate position to all players
- Basic grip
- Stance
- Stick on ice
- Use modified Equipment

# TACTICAL SKILLS

## Offensive Skills:

- Introduction to concepts of offensive skills and tactics
- Concepts of 1v1 offensive skills
- Team Work
- Individual 1v1 offensive skills
- Team tactics

## Defensive Skills:

- Introduction to concepts of defensive skills and tactics
- Individual 1v1 defensive skills and NO contact
- Basic team tactics

Unlike sports such as gymnastics which require early training and specialization, Ringette is a late (U10 and above) specialization sport. Keeping this in mind, Ringette at this age should be discouraged in any form other than as a fun, activity for kids that happens to increase awareness of Ringette.

**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 chooses to play Ringette on her own.**



# ROLE OF THE COACH:

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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 practice prepared before heading to the arena
- Look like a coach, be professional
- Set standards and be consistent with them
- Conduct age-appropriate practices
- Be enthusiastic, especially with young players
- Have fun



## POOR COACHING TECHNIQUES

- Have players stand in long boards
- Give long lectures on how to perform activities
- Skate laps around the rink as consequence or punishment
- Correct every mistake you see in a player
- Practices are not fun for your players
- 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 season

While we have all at times resorted to some of the above mentioned coaching methods, 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 might be another method that could prove more valuable.

## ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES OF COACHING:

### Development Appropriate

- When designing your practice, ensure that your drills are age appropriate. As an example, you wouldn't want your U9 players attempting one timers prior to learning the technique of the wrist shot!

### 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 example in this age group, you should start your practice with stationary passing to work on eye hand coordination as well as the stabbing of the ring. As the practice moves along you can slowly increase the challenge to the players by working on lead passes or board passes.

### Safe and Appropriate Training Area

- Prior to practicing always skate around the arena and look for anything that might pose a safety concern for your players. Also, make sure all gates are closed tightly.

### Decision Making

- Players at U9 age should be given some opportunities to make decisions on their own.

## 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 U9 age group, you don't need playing career behind you but you do need to know the proper technique of some of the basic Ringette skills such as passing/receiving, checking 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 an older talented player to do that for you.

# PRACTICE TOOLS

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## PLANNING YOUR PRACTICE:

### Important points in preparing your practice:

- Incorporate the fundamental sport and movement skills
- Activities with the ring should include games that promote skating, stopping/starting, turning or changing direction
- Try to play games to simulate an actual game
- Children this age love to use their imagination when they play, keep this in mind when designing activities
- Keep your activities short and simple as the ability for children this age to stay focused is very limited
- Lots of encouragement and patience
- Avoid activities where players wait in lines to perform a pre-determined movement or required action
- Do not try to replicate the organizational schemes of older player's practices
- It is a great idea to use older players as role models
- Confidence is key
- U9 players work well in pairs

### Practice Time:

When preparing your practice you should keep one very important thing in mind; ensure your players will have FUN! Your practice should emphasize the fun elements of the sport, and the development of good athletic skills. Each practice should only have one emphasis whether that is skating, passing/receiving, shooting, etc. While you may incorporate more than one technique the focus should be on one. As an example, there may be a skating and passing component to a shooting drill. Make sure that you also schedule in many water breaks.

## **Have an Imagination:**

It was already mentioned that lines are not a good idea and the U9 player will get bored quickly if all they do is drills where they stand a lot, have to listen to the coach talk all the time or constantly have their games stopped when they finally do get to play. It is up to you, the coach to come up with fun games that will develop some skill but more importantly allow the players to enjoy their experience. Ideally we want the players to mistake all drills for fun games and it is here that you will need to use some creativity. There are all sorts of fun games such as sharks and fishes, Dr. Ringette and capture the ring that will improve basic technique and provide the fun environment that you are after for this age group.

## **Key Aspects of Planning:**

- Write out a detailed lesson plan
- Make your plan follow a logical progression
  - Warm-up
  - Review
  - Introduce a new skill/activity
  - Breakdown practice skill
  - Related Drills
  - Related Games
  - Cool down
- Have a backup plan (in case drill finish early)
- Have a written breakdown including key teaching point
- Have your lesson plan with you when you are coaching (use a clip board)
- Refer to past lesson plans when making new plans
- Keep a record of all your practices for future use

## SAMPLE U9 PRACTICE FORMAT

Remember that training should only last 60 minutes.

1. Warm-up	Capture the Ring	8 minutes
2. Review 1	Passing Drills	12 minutes
	a. Stationary Passing	
	b. Lead Passing	
3. New Skill	Checking explanation and demo	5 minutes
4. Drills	Sharks and Fishes	20 minutes
	Ring Chase 1v1	
5. Game	3v3 in end zones	10 minutes
6. Cool down	Agility stretch	5 minutes

*Allow for a few water breaks throughout your practice*

## EQUIPMENT:

### **Player Equipment:**

In your first meeting with the parents you can inform them of what their child should bring to every practice:

- Full equipment
- Water bottle
- Ringette stick

### **Coaches Equipment:**

Most of your coaching gear should be provided by the federation and should contain:

- Cones
- Pinnies
- Rings
- First aid-kit

### **Your personal equipment:**

- Coaches board and markers
- Whistle
- Helmet
- Stick
- Skates