



TEAM CANADA – PROGRAM OF EXCELLENCE

HIGH PERFORMANCE PROGRAM





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INTRODUCTION

This manual provides a foundation for the preparation of Canadian players and coaches through their participation in the Program of Excellence. This technical curriculum is intended as a guide and resource for Branch technical preparation and should not be viewed as an instructional manual that binds each coach. The information contained in this document provides a framework that will enable a coach to implement his own technical package at the Branch level.

This package was developed by former National Team coaches that have experience at each level of the Program of Excellence. Hockey Canada is indebted to these coaches that have taken a concept and built a foundation for future success.

In comparing the Program of Excellence to the Canadian High School system, a coach at the U17 Level has an obligation to prepare a U17 for the National U18 Program the same as a Grade 10 teacher prepares a student for grade 11. The grade 11 teacher then prepares students for grade 12 in the same way an U18 coach prepares players for the National Junior team. Each coach and each teacher must follow a curriculum framework that prepares players or students with the best opportunity for success at the next level.

By implementing this technical curriculum at the U17 Branch level, Hockey Canada is building a foundation for athletes to succeed with our National Teams. While it should be the goal of each provincial/regional team to be successful at the Canada Winter Games and World Under 17 Hockey Challenge, the player development process should be at the forefront of program operations and this development component must not be compromised.

This commitment to preparing provincial and regional team athletes is the cornerstone for future World Junior, Senior World and Olympic Champions.





NATIONAL TEAM SELECTION CRITERIA

In order for Branches and regional teams to select athletes that are best suited for the international game and that are the top candidates for future participation in the Program of Excellence it is critical that evaluators follow a certain standard when evaluating players.

Hockey Canada relies on the Head Scout in conjunction with the National Junior Coaching staff to determine the selection criteria to be followed when selecting players on a year to year basis. From season to season the criteria may vary but a number of core criteria remain constant. There are common characteristics that equate to a Team Canada player that is best suited to compete on the world stage.

When selecting players at the regional level there must be consideration given to not only what the player will do for your provincial/regional team but also where this player may fit long term in the Program of Excellence. It is important that players have a fundamental knowledge of the principles put forward in this technical package and are capable of executing these concepts. If we are all on the same page in regards to the type of player that we need to develop through the Program of Excellence the better opportunity we will have to select potential candidates for our National Teams.

The following criteria are presented to assist the Provincial Camp personnel in identifying and selecting quality players to participate in the Program of Excellence.

What is a Program of Excellence Player?

It is important to remember that a POE player will be among the best players in his age group and will be competing against the best players in the world from other countries. Observable qualities include:

- highly skilled, competitive, and intelligent on the ice,
- willing to put personal goals aside and buy into the team concept,
- ready to accept a role different than normally used to,
- able to realize the importance of and play with emotional control, and
- display discipline both on and off the ice.

Attributes of a Program of Excellence Player:

STP: SPEED, TEMPO, PACE

- ability to think and execute at a high rate of speed on a consistent basis.

STRENGTH:

- competes and play at a high intensity level on a consistent basis.
- competes hard on the puck.
- ability to win 1on1 battles.





Positional Characteristics

Goal:

- Agile with good angles and rebound control
- Must be able to handle and move the puck
- Must understand the team concept
- Strong mental skills

Defense:

- Must be mobile and agile with good lateral movement
- Be able to contain players in 1on1 situations
- Must be a good positional player
- Must be able to read and react in order to move the puck quickly
- Must understand the team concept

Forwards:

- Must possess excellent skating qualities such as speed, quickness, agility, and strength.
- Must be an intelligent player that understands offensive and defensive systems
- Must understand the team concept.

Player Selection

The team must have great overall speed and be able to execute quickly. It is important to select skilled players that will commit to a team concept. The goal is to take the most skilled players available and assign specific roles. The “ghost roster” is no longer used to identify specific players to play in specific roles.

The final few decisions on any roster are always a difficult challenge. Many coaches prefer to take “character players” to fill final roster positions. While it is important to have character players, these players must have the necessary skill level to compete and bring a special component to the mix. Examples include special teams play (power play and penalty killing), speed, ability to play different positions etc. Players must also be able to play “up” in the lineup. Experience has shown that taking players with skill who have the ability to fill a role on special teams or replace someone in the top of the lineup are more effective than taking “character” or hard working players who may have less skill. For example, most National Team staffs will take a multi-dimensional offensive defenseman as a 7th defenseman because of his ability to play the power play even though he may have some deficiencies in his own end of the ice.





Selecting goaltenders has a unique set of challenges for the coach staff. Rarely will a team win a championship at the international level without great goaltending. The key ingredient for a POE goaltender is a simple one. Each goaltender selected must be capable of being the number one goaltender on the team and must be capable of having standout performances to win games on their own. It is crucial that the backup goaltender be able to fill the role of the number one goaltender.

Team Concept

Once players are selected it is critical that the team becomes a cohesive unit very quickly. This is where the player's character and attitude is paramount. Players must realize that the success of the team comes first and that they must contribute in every way they are capable.

TEAM TACTICS AND PRINCIPLES THAT GOVERN PLAY

Principles are general rules or laws which govern and guide the application of team tactics, systems, and strategies.

Four Principles govern offensive and defensive team play:

Offensive	Defensive
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pressure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Puck Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stall/Contain
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transition

In review of the principles that guide offensive and defensive team play, it should be understood that each of these principles must work inter-dependently of one another. For example, offensive transition can only lead to a quick and effective counteract if there is immediate pressure, good puck control and excellent offensive support away from the puck. If this does not occur, it is possible the opposing team may regain possession of the puck and the attacking team, after giving up possession, is now forced to demonstrate effective defensive transition.

Pressure - Offensive

Offensive pressure is created through a quick player and/or puck movement that forces the defender to react more quickly or in a different direction than they would like. The goal of pressure is to create increased time and space for the attackers.





Pressure - Defensive

Defensive pressure is created through a quick player movement that forces the offensive player to react more quickly or in a different direction than they would like. The goal of pressure is to decrease time and space for the attackers.

Puck Control - Offensive

Like in all sports based on possession, the principle of puck control is an important factor that contributes to offensive success. A team that is capable of keeping puck possession is capable of creating scoring chances.

Stall / Contain - Defensive

The principle of defensive play where the defensive team will attempt to force the opponent to stop or slow down the speed of an attack to provide time to set up better defensive coverage. This is accomplished by pressuring the puck carrier or deflecting the attack to the outside lanes/ice.

Support - Offensive

To provide offense, offensive players away from the puck must be available as passing options and be a part of the attack. Players must be able to read the intentions of their defensive counterparts and at the same time read and anticipate the movements and the possibilities of the puck carrier.

Support - Defensive

The player defending against the puck carrier requires the support of teammates to ensure that they are active away from the puck carrier and position themselves in a manner that will eliminate the options of the puck carrier. Players must be able to read the offensive options available to the puck carrier and move to a position that minimizes or takes away these options.

Transition - Offensive

Offensive transition is measured in a teams' ability to move quickly from defense to offense when the puck is recovered. All players must be prepared to move quickly to the attack.

Transition - Defensive

Defensive transition is measured in a teams' ability to move quickly from offense to defense should a turnover occur and the opposing team moves quickly to the attack.

