

THE TRAINING STRATEGIES OPTIMIZATION OF INITIATION TEAMS IN ICE HOCKEY

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Key words: *strategy, training, ice hockey.*

Abstract: *The essay elaborates a **strategic project selection and training** of youth ice hockey in the Romanian first formative stage, at the **U8 age group (6 -7 years)**. **Analytical program** must have: **objectives, content, instructional strategies and evaluation** tools specific to that level. Also, this approach is made taking into account the requirements of the modern game, defining characteristics of worldwide schools dedicated to hockey.*

Introduction

Compared with other European countries, ice hockey in Romania is less common and practiced as a high performance sport. The selection and training methodology exceeded and was unable to train players (teams) at world high performance level.

Motivation

One of them could be the lack of specialty and Romanian authentic scientific research, with reference task, selection, ice hockey players and team training (especially at juniors level).

The experience of 32 years in practice of ice hockey, where I met the selection criteria requirements and I crossed in time, all the formative stages of high performance athletes.

In addition with this to theoretical information sources, I had conversations with the following ice hockey specialists such as: Corduban Octavian, Florian Gheorghe, Marius Gliga (internally) and with: Tom Skinner, Kevin Figby, Junnu Kataya, Olexandr Kulikov (worldwide).

Purpose

Rethinking and restructuring the selection methodology and training of traditional ice hockey teams praxiological circuit model are presented below:

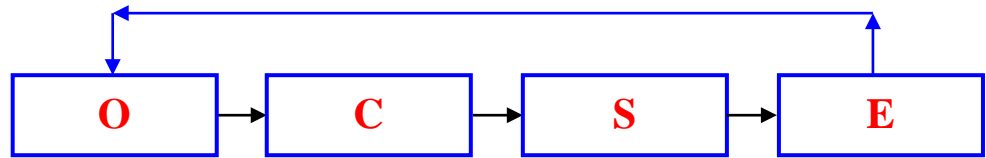


Figure no. 1 – Training process diagram

This circuit is a part of a true "praxiological axis" which always guarantees the quality and effectiveness of training conducted in each part of the formative stage.

Research objectives:

1. Studying literature and the composition of a theoretical synthesis and which sets the current level of knowledge and topics research;
2. Preliminary study on currently training strategy used in the traditional juniors teams, to identify optimization solutions;
3. To develop an analytical training program for the first formative stage, that will contain the following distinct elements: instructional objectives, content, instructional strategies, evaluation;
4. The practical application of curriculum developed;
5. Results interpretation and correction of the analytical program and of the experienced training strategies;

Research hypothesis

1. We believe that the currently traditional methodology could be improved whether it will be reconsidered and restructured based on the proxiological circuit model O-C-S-E (objectives, content, strategies, evaluation);
2. We believe that first hypothesis could be materialized through analytical programs and instructional projects where you could find the elements of praxiological circuit set and a number of minimum standards or scales expected for each formative stage;
3. Instructional strategies could be optimized if we succeed that teachers set targets to resolve them through an optimal combination means, methods, materials, principles, forms of training organization, teaching style in concordance contemporary methodological guidelines requirements of each benchmark competitions involving formative part etc.

Target group

The initiation children ice hockey teams of C.S.A "Steaua" Bucharest, stage U8 (6-7 years old).

Research methodology

In the research achievement, we used the following methods and investigative techniques:

- bibliographic documentation;
- direct observation;
- analysis of training program used to train hockey players and their comparison with those used by worldwide schools devoted to ice hockey (Canadian, Swedish, Czech, Russian, etc.)
- development and experimentation of new independent variables curriculums structured which are reported in the hypothesis.

LEVEL 1 - Initiation program U8 (6-7 years)

1. Objectives

- to involve a big number of children in ice hockey programs;
- enjoyable introduction and experience in ice hockey;
- teach the basic skating skills;
- teach the basic puck control skating skills
- to insure a high training support¹.

2. Content

a) Skating

Balance and Agility	Edge Control	Starting and Stopping	Forward Skating and Striding	Backward Skating	Turning and Crossovers
<input type="checkbox"/> Basic stance <input type="checkbox"/> Getting up from the ice <input type="checkbox"/> Balance on one foot <input type="checkbox"/> Gliding on two skates <input type="checkbox"/> Gliding on one skate – forward and backward <input type="checkbox"/> Lateral Crossovers – step and plant	<input type="checkbox"/> Figure 8's – forward – inside & outside edge <input type="checkbox"/> Figure 8's – backward – inside & outside edge	<input type="checkbox"/> T-start <input type="checkbox"/> Front v-start <input type="checkbox"/> Crossover start <input type="checkbox"/> Backward c-cut start <input type="checkbox"/> Backward crossover start <input type="checkbox"/> One o'clock – eleven o'clock <input type="checkbox"/> Outside leg stop <input type="checkbox"/> Two foot parallel stop <input type="checkbox"/> One-leg backward stop <input type="checkbox"/> Two-leg backward stop	<input type="checkbox"/> C-cuts – left foot / right foot / alternating <input type="checkbox"/> Forward striding	<input type="checkbox"/> C-cuts – left foot / right foot <input type="checkbox"/> Gliding on two skates – backward <input type="checkbox"/> Gliding on one skate – backward	<input type="checkbox"/> Glide turns <input type="checkbox"/> Tight turns <input type="checkbox"/> C-cuts – around circle – outside foot – forward & backward <input type="checkbox"/> Crossovers – forward & backward <input type="checkbox"/> Backward one-foot stop and t-start <input type="checkbox"/> Pivots – bwd to fwd & fwd to bwd <input type="checkbox"/> Pivots – open & reverse

Table no. 1 – Core Skills of Initiation Level I

Source: http://www.hockeycanada.ca/index.php/ci_id/7753/la_id/1.htm

b) Puck Control

Stationary Puck Control	Moving Puck Control	Stationary Passing and Receiving	Moving Passing and Receiving	Sweep Shot	Wrist Shot
<input type="checkbox"/> Stance: <input type="checkbox"/> Narrow <input type="checkbox"/> Wide <input type="checkbox"/> Side – front – side <input type="checkbox"/> Toe drag – side <input type="checkbox"/> Toe drag – front	<input type="checkbox"/> Narrow <input type="checkbox"/> Wide <input type="checkbox"/> Open ice carry – forehand & backhand <input type="checkbox"/> Weaving with puck <input type="checkbox"/> Toe drag – front & side <input type="checkbox"/> Puck in feet	<input type="checkbox"/> Stationary forehand pass <input type="checkbox"/> Stationary backhand pass <input type="checkbox"/> Stationary bank pass	<input type="checkbox"/> Moving forehand pass <input type="checkbox"/> Moving backhand pass <input type="checkbox"/> Load pass	<input type="checkbox"/> Forehand <input type="checkbox"/> Backhand	<input type="checkbox"/> Forehand – low <input type="checkbox"/> Backhand – low

¹ Practice Plan Manual For 8 & Under (Mite) (.pdf format)

Table nr. 2 – Core Skills of Initiation Level

Source: http://www.hockeycanada.ca/index.php/ci_id/7753/la_id/1.htm

3. Strategy

At this level, we have to focus on fun and good experience for youth ice hockey players. From a point of methodical view, they must begin to learn basic elements of ice hockey and to apply these in small area games².

a) Recommendation

- **technical skills - 85%** from total teaching time;
- **individual tactics - 15%** from total teaching time
- three practices to every game;
- we recommend one hour practice sessions; youngsters are easily fatigued
- develop and implementation of team spirit concept

b) On-Ice Training

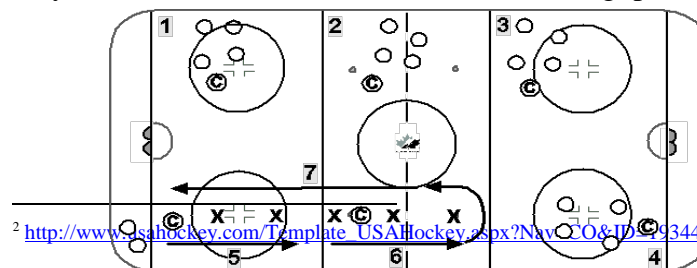
- emphasize the fundamentals
- introduction to skating;
- introduction to puck control;
- cross ice/small game activities

c) Off-Ice Activities

- optional
- encourage the players to participate in all sports year-round
- focus on a proper body position;
- to include different movement games in a certain and organized area;
- focus to improve dexterity, agility and flexibility

4. Evaluation

Testing of youth players has been made by passing a test, where they have been tested basic elements of skating, presented in figure no.1.



1. Basic stance
2. Getting up from the ice
3. Balance on one foot

- 4. Jumping - one foot
- 5. Gliding on two skates
- 6. Gliding on one skate - forward
- 7. Skating

Figure no. 1 Skating skills test

The tests have been **appreciated with marks from 1 to 5**, from which: **1- very low, 2 – low, 3 – medium, 4 – good, 5 – very good**. We used a marking system in order **to calculate points** number correctly for **each player** and for **each skill**.

Skill	Player																			Pts.
	S.A.	M.A.	J.R.	O.A.	B.D.	B.A.	B.V.	J.L.	R.E.	I.A.	S.G.	B.S.	R.M.	S.S.	N.T.	S.A.	V.C.	C.M.		
1. Basic stance	4	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	4,2	
2. Getting up from the ice	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4,8	
3. Balance on feet	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3,5	
4. Jumping - one foot	3	5	3	3	3	4	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	3	3,3	
5. Gliding on two skates	4	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	4,2	
6. Gliding on one skate - forward	4	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	4	3	4	3	5	5	3	4	5	5	4,2	
7. Skating	5	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	4	3	5	4	5	4	3	5	5	5	6,7	
Points (Pts.)	4	4	4	3	2	4	4	4	3	2	4	8	4	3	2	4	4	4		

Table no. 3 – Results after the skating skill testing

Information from the above table give us the possibility **to design the progress level** for each player, and also the learning level for each skating skill.

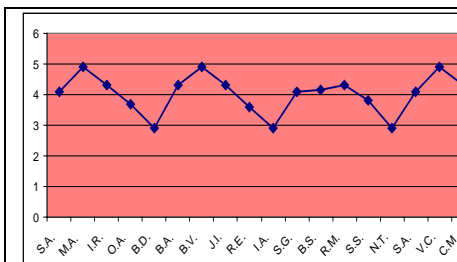


Figure no. 2 – The progress level for players

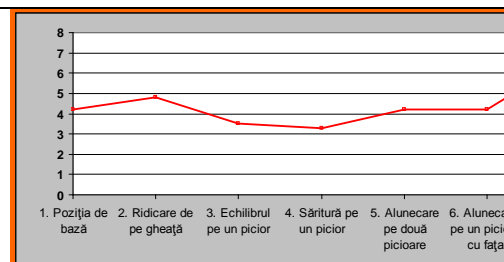


Figure no. 3 – The learning level for basic elements in skating

In the figure no.1 we could see that all members from the „beginners in skating” group of A.S.C. „STEAUA” Bucharest are at

medium level or higher, which it demonstrates that learning process after **praxyological type O-C-S-E** (objectives, contents, strategies, evaluation) has been made correctly and it **was efficient**.

Figure no. 2 shows us that basic elements were learned correctly, but the equilibrium should be emphasized on and on.

Conclusions

Experimental approach pursued so far allows us to make the following findings:

1. First working hypothesis is confirmed and namely that the traditional methodology must be reconsidered and restructured by the praxiological circuit model, composed of objectives – contents - strategies - evaluation.
2. We believe that efficiency and quality of training conducted could be calculated continuously by feedback operation is done through evaluation of instructional objectives set.

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Titlu: Optimizarea strategiilor de instruire la nivelul grupelor de inițiere în hochei pe gheață.

Cuvinte cheie: Strategie, instruire, hochei pe gheață.

Rezumat: Lucrarea elaborează un proiect strategic pentru selecția și instruirea tinerilor hocheiști români la nivelul primului stadiu formativ, la vârsta u8 (6 -7 ani). programa analitică cuprinde: obiective, conținuturi, strategii de instruire și instrumente de evaluare a nivelului de pregătire achiziționat.

Titre: L'optimization des strategies de formation aux niveau d'équipes d'enfants en hockey sur glace.

Mot-cle: Stratégie, la formation, hockey sur glace.

Resume: L'article présente une sélection des projets stratégiques et la formation de jeunes hockeyeur sur glace roumain au stade de la premier formative, en présentant les exigences U8 groupe d'âge (6 à 7 ans). Pour chaque partie du stade de la formation il doit être développé et testé un propre programme avec des objectifs, contenu, des stratégies pédagogiques et des outils pour évaluer le niveau de formation acquis.