

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLAND HOCKEY COACHING STRATEGY



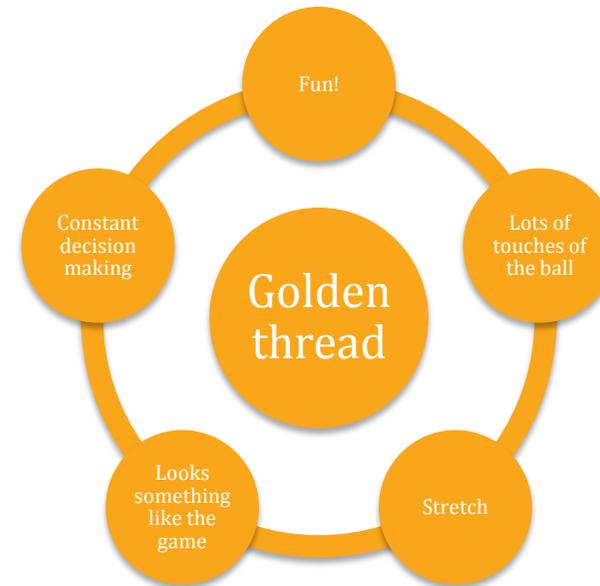
ENGLAND
HOCKEY

What should every coaching session include?

What should the Golden Thread be?

- Fun
- Lots of touches of the ball
- Stretch (physically and mentally)
- Looks something like the game
- Constant decision making

A detailed curriculum, profile, or 'the what' is not the direction that EH wants to take. The priority is for coaches to focus on the environment and experience that is going on. If the basics are taken care of in practice design, there will be implicit and deep learning – THIS IS THE KEY – not, focussing on a range of themes or priorities.



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Before focussing any energy on themes, apply 'The Golden Thread' – THIS IS A MUST. When ALL sessions are fun, players are getting lots of touches on the ball, there is constant decision making, players are getting stretched (mentally and physically), when sessions look something like hockey and when you are generating repetition without repetition AS A MATTER OF COURSE, we can really begin to think about more of the specifics of the game.

Coaches continue to be a cornerstone of Hockey. Be it introducing someone to the game for the first time, working with a club side or engaging with the performance environment across Great Britain, the coach is a critical factor in determining the quality of a player's experience. The sport has a responsibility to lead the culture and support for coaches to excel in the creation of more, better and happier players and is committed to offer a wider range of learning opportunities that provide a framework and ideas for coaches to deliver fun, engaging and learning sessions for players. The learning opportunities have been designed to provide a:

- **Player centred, coaching approach**
- **Games rather than drills culture**
- **Questioning style**

The skilled modern coach will need to use all three coaching principles and continue to advance their development in these areas to provide the best possible experience and learning environments for the player.

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Hockey's priorities in developing players through hockey is to have:

Excellent problem solvers, excellent decision makers and Players who are effective under pressure, Self-aware and Self-organising;

That will lead too having

Highly skilled, creative and adaptable players.....

Hockey believe in learning environments where:

Decision-making in game is integral in every exercise, Playing time is maximised, Repetitive closed drills are non-existent, Variability and chaos are encouraged,

Pressure is appropriately embedded in exercises: time, space and fatigue

That will lead to having.....

Players growing with open minds and are empowered and responsible for their development and performance

A player centred, coaching approach

There is good evidence that effective learning can take place without direct or prescriptive intervention from the coach: **The GAME is the TEACHER, the PITCH is the CLASSROOM, the COACH is the FACILITATOR.**

The role of the coach is to become the facilitator, creating more open environments where the players have more say, feel valued and actively participate in their own learning. The style of telling instructions has been proven to be very ineffective and is not motivational for players. **What would happen if a coach didn't turn up?**

Instead of using instructions and drills, helping players come to grips with the rudiments of the game, technically and tactically through simplified games, constraints and effective questioning will allow players to discover new information themselves which deepens their understanding and facilitates better decision making.

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The culture created by the coach is critical. The coach can offer a safe, comfortable and fun environment by being approachable, inclusive and non-judgemental. They should support players to take risks and try new things for themselves **knowing that mistakes are not going to be punished**, but encouraged.

Games rather than drills culture

PLAYING Hockey is the best way to learn the game. Player's need games that:

- Stimulate them technically, tactically, physically and cognitively in equal measure
- Promote understanding of the game
- Improve their perception and decision-making ability
- Help them learn to adapt quickly and effectively to constantly changing situations of the game

Historically, the development of skill has been coached in a highly prescriptive and drill based fashion, which will have limited athlete development.

Outcomes of Games versus Drills

Drills	Games
Static	Dynamic
Military	Unstructured
Lines	Free Movement
Boring	Fun
No thought	Decision Making

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Game based coaching is not about letting players just play a game but it's a subtle coaching approach of **GAME – TRAIN – GAME** with an emphasis on player engagement in active reflection and problem solving. The following features can be observed in effective game based coaching:

- The use of small sided games to accelerate learning through greater player opportunity maximum participation
- The use of practice tasks that represent the complexity and constraints of the game so players 'practice as they will play'
- This representation occurs by manipulating game constraints to also bring about a specific learning focus, so there is 'play with purpose'
- Coaches using effective guided discovery to help players find their own answers to the problems experienced during play rather than providing them
- Progressively increasing the challenge of activities, so players are continuously challenged to improve but practicing at the edge of their ability

Example

Game – with clear learning objectives / constraints
Key questions from the coach
Train – still using constraints
Key questions from the coach
Game – with clear learning objectives / constraints
Conclusion – reinforcement of key learning objectives
Coaches reflection

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Questioning Approach

The coach's role should be one of a facilitator role rather than a prescriptive director. While most players have experienced hockey training environments dominated by telling, the coach should help players much more by trying to involve them in the decision-making process, through effective questioning.

Effective questioning or 'guided discovery' simply means that the coach uses a more indirect route to gain new information. They raise awareness through open and closed questions and provide options / choices for the players, arousing their curiosity and guiding them to the answers for themselves.

These are some suggestions to introduce more questioning in your coaching:

- Develop your own knowledge of the simplified game and all its objectives
- Use as few closed questions as possible. These simply require a yes or no answer and do not stimulate the players to think
- Open questions, using Tell, Explain, Describe (TED), Who, What, Where, When, Why (5W's) and How, demand further reflection
- Never reject the players response
- Give positive encouragement to respondents to show that you were actually listening to what they have to say

Points to Consider

On the following 2 pages there is an example "game card". The "what" to coach has been provided.

Using the information you have read above consider

- "how" you might deliver this game to the players you coach.
- "how" this game may be adapted to a different group of players e.g.
 - Children vs Adults
 - Beginners vs Experienced players

GAME
CARD

4 V 2 POSSESSION



- > Have players in three pairs identified by three different bibs.
- > Two pairs are continually playing against one pair; to make a continuous 4 v 2.
- > When a player makes a mistake or is dispossessed, they and their partner become the defending pair.



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PITCH: 23m x 23m

PLAYERS: Six (four attackers and two defenders)

EQUIPMENT: Sticks | Balls | Bibs | Cones | Throw down lines

GAME IS THE TEACHER, PITCH IS THE CLASSROOM, COACH IS THE FACILITATOR

4 V 2 POSSESSION

GAME
CARD

+ PROGRESSIONS

- > 6 v 3.
- > Make the game end directed by offering an exit point via one of the sides of the playing area.

? QUESTIONS

WHAT FACTORS
INFLUENCE THE
INTERPLAY OF THE
FOUR ATTACKERS?

The off the ball runs of the teammates of the player in possession, the position of the defenders and their decision when to add pressure.

WHAT DOES THE
ATTACKER WITH THE
BALL HAVE TO PAY
ATTENTION TO?

The positioning of the defenders in relation to the availability of team mates.

HOW IMPORTANT
IS IT TO KEEP
POSSESSION?

It is important to have possession of the ball, but it is more important to know what to do with it.

