

# PGKA COACHING CERTIFICATION LEVEL 1 HANDBOOK

## Introduction

Welcome to the Pama Golden Knights Academy hockey coach certification course. This course was designed by world champion coaches, Dave Hammond and Pablo Navarro together with PGKA staff.

In this first level, we will work together on key points for success, points that many coaches around the world did not have the chance to work in their early career, as most of them came from a lifetime as a player.

Within this course, we will break this paradigm. The information contained here was for you who are starting or for you who are an experienced trainer. Information is never too much, and that is the life of a coach, learning more and more.

Here, too, a lot that you already know may have another perspective that will further enrich your knowledge.

Why is it important to identify the characteristics of successful coaches?

One way to answer that question is by asking why people coach. Most people coach because they enjoy working in sports and with athletes.

Most appealing about the relationship with athletes is assisting them in achieving their goals. To achieve goals, athletes need skill and knowledge—and someone to introduce this skill and knowledge competently.

To return to the original question of why we should identify the characteristics of successful coaching, if helping athletes is one of the reasons people coach, and if it were known exactly the coaching characteristics that promoted athletes' achievement, wouldn't coaches use those characteristics?

Acquiring skills and knowledge would allow the coach to be part of a beneficial transfer of information to the athlete, assisting in the success of each.

Successful coaches must possess all, or most, of the following qualities, which can translate to essential qualities for your workplace leaders:

- Knowledge of the Sport
- Patience
- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Inspirational
- Conflict Management
- Performance Management
- Initiative
- Conscientiousness

Are you ready to be a successful coach?

## **Be a leader**

### *Coach leadership*

Being a good professional is a task that requires continuous effort and commitment. However, it is stated that "in order to be a good coach, the person must be sufficiently interested in the sport, finding in him, without any effort, the motivation to work and study". Pablo Navarro.

Nowadays, with the modernization of societies and, consequently, with the updating of their ethical ideals, sport, namely inline hockey, has become a leisure activity of great importance, whether it be actively, through its practice, or in a less active way via parents and fans of the sport. In this way, modern society is increasingly focused on obtaining positive results, thus ignoring all the work that these results require.

Coaching goes far beyond winning. This profession implies several functions such as decision-making, training organization, managing pressure exerted, both on him and on athletes, controlling emotions, etc. Thus, even though the ideal profile of a coach has never been developed, it is admitted that there are essential characteristics for him to be a good professional, such as being a good leader, a good communicator, being serene, decisive, motivating, and knowing how to react before the diversity of situations that an athlete or team is faced with.

Like communication, group cohesion is an important success factor, being achieved through leadership. According to Singer (1977), "leadership is understood as a relationship of interaction between personality and the situation, since the whole situation requires special talents to face and solve them". Following the same line of thought, the authors Cartwright and Zander (1967), affirm that "the leader is the one whose interactions allow to improve the quality and the cohesion of the group, and this leadership can be shared or exercised by one or more members of the group". Later, Noce (1992), says that "a good leader must be a good communicator, effective in transmitting the message and with a great capacity to solve problems and make appropriate decisions". In this way, group cohesion is an important factor as all members of the team are focused on achieving the objectives outlined by the leader.

Thus, if the leader does not have the most appropriate characteristics, or even if he does not integrate properly, the communication of objectives to the team may fail, leading to the team's failure.

The behavior of the leader towards the team is related to the behavior of the athletes, so their behavior is directly linked to two specific dimensions: Social Relationship (affection, indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect) and the Execution of Tasks (organization, communication and procedural methods).

According to Noce (2002) there are several types of leadership, such as situational leadership that is created with the aim of molding the leader's behavior to the characteristics of the team and the sporting situation; subordinate leadership by maturity; and democratic leadership.

Different leadership styles require a leader who communicates clearly, so that the message and ideas are correctly conveyed and interpreted.

An unsafe and clear leader in transmission has greater difficulty in interacting with his athletes. In a team, there is a great diversity of individuals, and it is very complex for a leader to communicate with all athletes. That is why it is necessary to promote four behaviors in the trainer: reinforcement, encouragement after the error, corrective instructions and technical instructions and also highlight the importance of reducing four behaviors considered undesirable: the absence of reinforcement, punishment, and instruction punitive technique.

A coach should know as much about his or her sport as possible, because knowledge of the sport is the most important factor in overall coaching success. Such knowledge can be gained through education and experience, but knowledge is more than just knowing rules and regulations. It is also the ability to draw on all one's resources to make the right decisions.

Growing as a leader requires that we give up the things that are familiar to us, that we take new steps and do things in new ways. Those actions are what change is made of. The reward lies not in what we get from growth, but in what we become because of our growth.

Here are some daily habits you can take to grow as a leader:

**Develop a repertoire of skills.** To be the best leader you are capable of being, you need to constantly be mastering new competencies, instead of relying on the skills you already have under your belt. Growing leaders are constantly updating and expanding their skills and knowledge.

**Learn through your experiences.** The more you experience, the more you know. That means that even the most difficult challenges present an opportunity to engage in that experience, learn the lessons it holds, and apply your new knowledge to whatever comes next.

**Challenge your comfort zone.** It's tempting to lull yourself into always doing the same things in the same ways with the same people at the same time with the same results. But there's no room in that picture for stretching yourself to become better. Get comfortable being uncomfortable, because that's how you grow.

**Focus on the future by being present today.** When you're stuck in the past it can be hard to get unstuck, but when you're focused on the present you know that everything you do today will affect the future. Growing leaders know that the present is the foundation for the future.

**Set the bar high.** Most people wonder, "How can I get there faster, quicker, and in a shorter time?" But leaders who are serious about growth are always raising the bar for themselves, not just for others. They keep the bar high and do everything they can to consistently reach it.

**Look within.** When you first start in position of leadership, you're more concerned with your external qualities, but as you grow in leadership you rediscover that leading is an internal quality. To lead outwardly you first must learn to lead from within.

**Keep asking questions.** Growing leaders are always asking questions. Many people believe that leadership is about knowing all the answers, but that's simply wrong. True leadership is about being inquisitive. When you stop asking questions, you stop growing.

**Leverage your weaknesses.** It's easy to play from your strengths, but when you become better acquainted with your own weaknesses and learn to leverage them, you're positioning yourself to grow as a leader.

**Embrace failure.** All of us fall at some point; it's getting up again that counts. Being able to weather failure and recover is a sign of growth—and the source of some of the most important lessons you'll ever learn.

**Work with a coach.** The best way to grow as a leader is to have an external support. A coach can help you to become a better version of yourself by guiding you through important decisions, keeping you grounded in difficult times, and helping you understand your purpose and goals. Most importantly, they can help you learn faster from your successes and failures.

**Lead from within:** Growth is the great separator between those who succeed and those who don't.

Coaches need to know more than just Xs and Os and rules of the game. Coaching knowledge encompasses a broad range of information, for example which drills are best suited to athletes' developmental level and most likely to improve their skills.

Coaches must know how to condition athletes (and how to rehabilitate injured athletes) safely. They must know how to run a productive practice and how to make adjustments in game situations. Without mastering communication and motivational skills, they will not get their points across to players. The list of things a coach must have knowledge of is endless. But knowledge alone does not guarantee success. It is important that a coach understands when, where, and how to use information effectively.

A coach who lacks knowledge in a given area can develop it by educating himself or herself. Clinics, seminars, and classes are available, or, less formally, understanding can be developed by watching videos or reading books and periodicals on the topic of interest. One area a coach should be well versed in is athletic injuries.

Injuries are an inevitable part of athletic participation, making basic knowledge of first aid necessary for all coaches. In most sports-related emergencies, medical professionals will not be available immediately, so the coach must be prepared to make decisions.

Education is only part of the approach to strengthening coaching knowledge. Experience—actual hands-on practice—is a great substitute if education opportunities are not readily available. Nevertheless, the ideal situation would be for a coach to possess a combination of both education and experience.

In order for them to see you as a leader, it is in this field that you speak properly, and that the information you provide is valuable.

There is nothing worse than seeing someone talking about a subject that she doesn't know, it makes the speech lose all the credibility it should have, and generates insecurity among the team members that it doesn't work out. which usually results in failure.

Leading does not just know how to communicate, having a good public speaking, knowing how to convince people. A good leader has complete control over what he talks about, in order to generate in his team the feeling of having a reliable north, knowing that whoever gave the order knows what he is talking about.

**Here are seven opportunities to grow as a leader, the more closely you follow them, the better your chances of success.**

1. Identify your motivation. ...
2. Unmask your flaws.
3. Learn from your failures. ...
4. Appreciate feedback. ...
5. Listen to those with more experience. ...
6. Refuse to settle for mediocrity.
7. Invest in yourself.

A good leader is one who always generates good results!

## **Communication:**

For coaches, communication often means making one's point clear to athletes. Getting points across is essential to players' success. The coach's capacity to transfer knowledge (information) affects the outcome of both single contests and entire seasons. Then, too, communication is a two-way street. Successful coaches can interpret feedback given to them by players (and others) and use the feedback in making decisions. Feedback can result in subtle or drastic adjustments or none at all. Communication and feedback can sometimes be nonverbal. Coaches and players often recognize each other's states of mind simply by observing mannerisms and gestures. If their characteristics include skill at communicating, they can use nonverbal cues to promote success.

Coaches with good communication skills seem to succeed in getting the most from players. The characteristic of communicating ideas to players clearly is one that successful coaches rely on. Communication breakdowns mean undelivered messages, so coaches and players who want to achieve established goals must talk and listen to each other.

Five suggests points to improve coaches' communication with athletes successfully.

- First, have a plan that includes clear understanding of who it is that must be communicated with.
- Second, know what it is that needs to be communicated; exactly what is the point of your question or comment?
- Third, consciously determine when and where a message can best be delivered (e.g., at practice or a game; before, during, or after the practice or game).
- Fourth, understand why you want the message communicated, what its importance is or how it may help players succeed.
- Five, consider how messages and information would be most appropriately communicated.

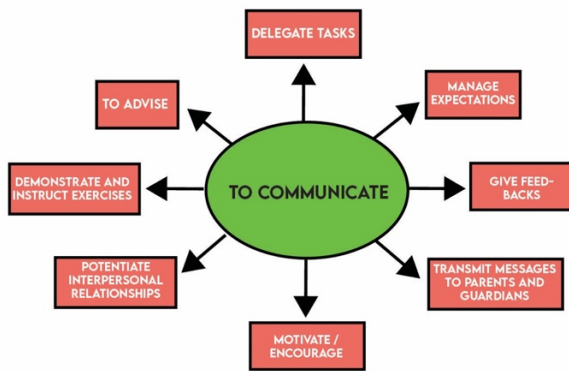
A successful coach develops relationships with their players in order to teach and motivate them best. The two-way communication in such relationships means both coach and players can learn from each other. The trust developed through such relationships often provides those involved with a unique and rewarding experience.

A successful coach does not let a different behavior go unnoticed in a given athlete. He notices sadness, anxiety, quietness, and noticing this, approach the athlete. Open a line of communication let him speak, and give the necessary support. Approaching his athletes to problems not related to the sport, the coach demonstrates that he is willing to listen to him and sometimes the coach is the only person available for that.

### **The central hole of communication**

Human beings do not communicate only through words, verbalized or written. The mere posture of the coach to accompany a training exercise or a game reveals a lot: attention, interest, annoyance, exaltation, joy, lack of commitment, respect, etc.

This posture "contaminates", positively or negatively, the kids. Overall, communication occurs in multiple ways and almost permanently, hence it has a central role in this process (figure 1).



The intonation that is placed in the words, the facial expression, the gestures and the gestures can have an impact superior to the message's own semantics.

Recently, the famous American actress Meryl Streep stated that "disrespect invites disrespect" and the coach, as a role model for children and young people, cannot ignore that the attitude communicates. A positive, frontal and open attitude towards dialogue is the first step to avoid future resentments and misunderstandings.

Negative feedback, insults and constant reprimands have harmful effects on self-esteem, confidence and motivation, compromising the learning and evolution of the young soccer apprentice. In the same logic, joy causes well-being, commitment induces work and patience provides security, factors recognized for fostering a training environment conducive to the acquisition of specific and general skills.

How to improve a coach communication?

A few days ago I heard the expression: "the coach is not a superhero". I totally agree! Although his duties include quite diverse tasks, he does not have to be an expert in human psychology, sociology, physiology and biology, first aid, etc.

First of all, the coach must surround himself with collaborators who help him in the training process and in the countless requests to which extra training / game must correspond. The suggestions that we propose below aim, in the first place, to make the trainer aware of his abilities as a communicator. Subsequently, the feedbacks collected should originate strategies to mitigate their gaps and enhance their valences.

**1) Consider the possibility of having a psychologist available to collaborate.**

Coaches, don't be presumptuous. Having a professional in these areas to collaborate with us is an undeniable asset. Either or both of them make us observe things that, as a rule, we are not aware of in relation to our behavior and the relational dynamics that are generated among children / young people. For example, through playful games, retrospective assessments, sociometric or network analyzes, we can detect problems in the interactions between the kids and, inherently, adopt a communication more in line with the specificity of the situation.

**2) Film training sessions and games to evaluate communication with players and with other sports agents (referees, assistant coaches delegates etc.)**

Collecting images about the intervention itself is a powerful tool for the coach's self-assessment. It is amazing how many lessons can be learned from our communication. Creating an observation sheet is useful to understand which are the least good points and whether they are being resolved over time. The big obstacle is that the coach rarely has the resources and / or availability to review himself.

**3) Develop an autoscoping at the end of each training session, game or weekly cycle, placing emphasis on aspects related to communication.**

Autoscopy can stimulate reflection on what has been done and how it should have been done: «Did I do well? Could you have communicated otherwise? » Basically, being aware of the error helps you find strategies to eliminate it.

**4) Ask athletes and parents to complete simple questionnaires anonymously assessing coaches' communication during games and training.**

Is there better feedback than that given by the main targets of our communication? Do you like it or not? What do you think the coach could improve? Whether or not you agree with the answers, it is a topic that deserves the reflection of all of us.

**5) Coordinators and coaches should hold occasional meetings to discuss factors related to communication.**

impossibility of having a psychologist and / or sociologist to collaborate with the coaches, the technical coordinator is the best placed agent to do so. Constructive criticism, brainstorming and sharing experiences between coaches are valuable ways to deal with communication problems that may be occurring, even when they are not perceived by the coach himself.

**6) If you communicate well, it doesn't mean talking too much.**

Quality and quantity are not synonymous. After a day of school at school, or older athletes after a long day at work, it is counterproductive to slaughter them with lots of specific content, goals or other information.

Basically, to communicate well is to convey the right message at the right time.

The message can perfectly pass through positive evaluative feedback projected in a simple smile or in a clapping action

**7) Adopt "positive communication".**

As we mentioned earlier, if the coach transmits enthusiasm, joy, concern, seriousness and interest, it will generate a more "positive" attitude in the athletes. Ultimately, this attitude will make learning much more effective and faster

#### **Communication conclusion:**

Communicating is a social act that human beings have felt the need to develop throughout history. We all communicate, it is true, but not always well. How many of us think, on a daily basis, of studying and perfecting the ways of communicating? Virtually no one!

Communicating well makes it possible to consolidate and reinforce a base of cooperation that will end with a better result and better coexistence.

Although it is not a guarantee of "elitism" or "high performance" in the future, knowing how to communicate in the sports training process, whether in inline hockey or in any other modality, can make all the difference in the education of athletes.

"There are no winning teams without good communication, and there are no memorable teams where communication is not excellent." Pablo Navarro.

## Players skills

Coaches must be able to critique players' skills and make the proper recommendations to help players improve. What goes into critiquing differs by level of play, because coaches' judgment must weigh players' developmental levels, both physical and mental. As athletes mature, practice skills can become more physically challenging and complicated. Stressing that skill development should be age (i.e., developmentally) appropriate. A coach evaluating athletes' progress must take into account each player's gender, age, weight, and strength. The coach must also understand that sport readiness depends on three basic neurodevelopmental components: (a) the attainment of basic motor skills, (b) social development (ability to interact with others), and (c) cognitive aptitude (understanding of instructions, strategy, and tactics). With these variables in mind, the coach can choose the drills that are right for the athletes.

## Practice plan

Quality of practice includes the content of a practice session what goes on during the practice situation. Content includes but is not limited to teaching requisite skills, transferring knowledge (information), and undertaking conditioning. Quality of practice also reflects the frequency and duration of practice. How often teams or individuals practice is the frequency, while the duration is the length of time practice sessions last. A coach must decide how often and how long athletes should practice to develop skills and knowledge most effectively. The timing of practices affects their quality, so coaches must also tailor practice to the season. In the preseason, a practice is usually shorter and emphasizes conditioning. During the season practices are longer (at least in the beginning, though they often get shorter as the end of the season nears), because so many materials typically need to be covered.

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we would like to leave our thanks here and also to express the satisfaction of being able to work and count on all of you.