

## **COMPLETE CONDITIONING FOR HOCKEY**

**By Peter Twist (2007)**

### **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT / GROUP DYNAMICS SKILLS**

*The style of hockey-specific conditioning and training methodologies requires an interactive element between coach and athlete. It is not enough that the players are working hard. It is not enough for the coach to demonstrate a series of exercises that the players will run through. The coach must:*

- OBSERVE
- EVALUATE
- CORRECT
- CUE
- ENGAGE
- MOTIVATE

*This process should affect current workout modifications and subsequent practice planning. The coach must coach 360 degrees. He needs to be visually aware 100 percent of the time. The coach needs to be a confident communicator who gives clear, concise instructions and stays positive when giving feedback. He needs to teach purposefully rather than just run players through drills. The coach sets the tone, spirit, and level of professionalism. **Athletes often take their cues in attitude, personality, and behavior from their coaches.** The coach needs to enter each training session in the state of mind that he expects his athletes to be in. The coach must never let the athletes exceed his energy level. For a coach, energy is the most important tool for motivating athletes. If a coach is bored or uninterested, you can bet that the athletes are too. An effective active coach is not a fitness taskmaster or boot camp sergeant. **The coach's ability to instruct, observe, and correct will contribute far more to an athlete's development than simply yelling for more effort.***

*The coach must insist that athletes contribute to the success of the workout. They must:*

- Show up on time
- Listen to instruction
- Assist with setting up and putting away equipment to keep the workout flowing and the room safe
- Bring positive attitude and good energy
- Have a solid work ethic to help themselves and other players raise the bar to a higher intensity level

*If a player cannot commit to these simple requirements, if he cannot develop a positive approach to training, everyone is better off if the coach removes him from the environment. **The chance to learn and improve is an opportunity.** A player who is too immature or simply not into it should be removed to preserve the integrity of the environment and protect the experience for those who are committed. A coach must avoid spending a disproportionate amount of time with a high-maintenance player while ignoring hard working, enthusiastic, and motivated players.*

*I believe that telling players to "do this" or "do that" or "follow me" doesn't work. They don't know what "this" means. They may think they're doing what you want them to do but each person's interpretation of what you want them to do may be different. Everyone learns differently; the challenge is to reach all students.*

*The teaching methods that I use stress understanding (at all ages). I teach by appealing to the intellectual abilities of the students, then by incorporating all the senses - **I want students to see (visualize), feel, hear, and think. I call it the FAST method - FEEL, ACT, SEE, THINK.***

*Some ways of explaining things work for some people but not for others. Some visualizations work for some but not for others. Some drills work for some but not for others. Therefore we must have many different ways of explaining things and use many different drills to teach the same thing. I always try to keep this in mind.*

-Laura Stamm