



Field Hockey Canada Coach Resource: 5 steps coaching process

There are five common steps to teaching sport skills to athletes, following this process within a supported learning environment (ie respectful, enthusiastic, fun) will allow athletes to learn, try and develop new skills, while providing a structured approach for you, as a community coach to observe the athletes, make feedback and watch them learn and grow.

5 Step Coaching Process:

EXPLAIN – lets the athletes know what they should be doing

SHOW – the opportunity to demonstrate a good execution

WATCH – observe how the athletes perform the activity

GIVE FEEDBACK – verbal cues and interventions to improve performance

WATCH AGAIN – watch for changes in performance

Positioning Tips

- Position yourself so that everyone can see you. Proper group positioning depends entirely on what you want athletes to see and on the environment. Here are a few ideas for positioning a group while you are explaining an activity:
- If you are outdoors, make sure the sun isn't in athletes' eyes.
- Position athletes so that distractions are behind them.
- Check that you can see both eyes of each athlete before beginning.
- If noise is preventing the group from hearing you, either reposition the group or wait until the group can hear you.
- Train athletes to automatically check when they go into groups that everyone can see.
- If possible and when appropriate, position yourself beside the athlete who most often tries to distract others.

EXPLAIN AND SHOW

Here are some suggestions to reference to support during the Explain and Show steps:

- Start your explanation by:
 1. Naming the activity.
 2. Stating the purpose of the activity.
 3. Listing 3 key points about performing the activity.
- Give brief, clear, and complete explanations; avoid long explanations for things you can demonstrate.



- Use words athletes can understand.
- Speak enthusiastically, loud enough, and at a pace that everyone can follow.
- Give “action” instructions (e.g. “Make as many passes as you can in one minute”).
- Ask questions to verify that athletes understand what to do.
- If you lose the attention of the athletes, you may be talking too much. Have athletes moving as quickly and as often as possible! This explanation should last no more than 1-2 minutes.
- Explanations tend to be an effective technique with athletes whose main learning channel is audio. Kinesthetic learners may not understand or be able to execute your directions after the first explanation.
- After your brief explanation, you will need to demonstrate how the activity should look when performed correctly at the athletes’ stages of development. This will help athletes create a mental picture of the movement they should be trying and is an excellent way to capture the visual learners in your group.
- In a good demonstration, movements are executed correctly and the demonstration occurs at the right moment (before athletes try the movement and once they have the necessary skills).
- Check that the athletes understand what they are to do.
- Decide who should demonstrate and what view (front, side, back) the athletes will see.
- Consider using athletes who can do the activity as demonstrators.

Ex When teaching the Sweep Hit and Reception

Introduction of the activity:

1. Set up, cones, athletes and flow. This could be part of the planning and shown on a coaching board.
2. Explain the full activity, drill or activity set up, athletes involved and flow of the drill.
3. Show where sweep passes and receptions happen and where athletes go before and after their skill. This will help to manage the safety on the field.

Remember to explain to athletes about a specific component of the sweep or reception (i.e. when you are sweeping, keep your stick on the ground, and your hands together).

- Physically walk through the drill set up so all athletes know the flow, expectations, and skills.
- Give WHOLE-PART-WHOLE demonstration.
- Ask for questions of clarification.



Watch

Here are some suggestions of how you can coach when it comes to Watch:

Single technique (e.g. a stationary push):

- Decide where to stand when observing to have the best view in order to see the key points you have identified in your explanation.
- If you are watching for the athlete's grip control, then you will need to position yourself to see this.

Technique in action (e.g. a push pass in motion):

- You can define the start point and area within your field set up to enable some control.
- However, there will be more to look at and analyze. You will need to be moving your coaching position in order to see different elements.

Individual athlete's competitive performance (e.g. small unit play 3v3):

- You can decide where to stand to observe, but the techniques and skills you see will vary.
- You must concentrate on a few parts of the performance.
- Trying to analyze everything will be difficult and very confusing.

Competitive team performance (e.g. a hockey team, playing a game):

- Select a few things for your focus, say team skill and tactics, and observe them carefully.
- Don't try to see everything.

Some points to consider when positioning yourself to observe an activity:

Field set up and athlete organization:

- Athlete safety before and after execution.
- Flow of the activity (i.e. athletes are not moving through the path of the ball).
- Group management (have you set clear expectations, rules, and penalties).

Where the coach should stand to observe the skill you are teaching:

- Is your positioning safe for the coach and athletes?
- Do you have a good angle of vision to see execution of your coaching points?
- Can you give immediate feedback to the athletes?
- Should you move around to view the performance from different points of view? How and where?

What to look for and when to intervene:

- If there are safety issues, intervene immediately.



- If the athletes aren't on task, intervene immediately and ensure everyone understands the activity.
- If the athletes are on task but aren't immediately successful, let them keep practicing and try to succeed.
- Do you have a strategy for dealing with inappropriate behaviour?
- Always give yourself opportunities to reflect and engage with the athletes, because this will help you better help them!





Give Feedback, Make Interventions, and Watch Again

Here are some suggestions of how you can coach when it comes to Feedback and Interventions:

Use the most appropriate form of feedback.

- Feedback can take many forms, so be sure to vary your feedback.
- While much feedback is verbal, demonstrating and reinforcing skills can be more effective at certain points in the learning process.

Keep it short and simple.

- Use simple words and easy-to-understand language.

More is not always better.

- Giving feedback too often can make athletes so dependent on it that performance suffers when the feedback is removed.

Don't rush your feedback.

- Give athletes time to figure out how things are going.
- Giving feedback too quickly can interfere with athletes processing their own feedback and with their ability to evaluate their own performance.

Before giving feedback, ask learners to describe their own errors.

- This will help athletes become better at evaluating their own performances.

Be positive and constructive, not destructive or negative.

- Strike a balance between encouraging things done well and pointing out areas for improvement.
- For example: "Your bounce pass has improved since last practice. The next step is to try to direct the ball where your teammate is going to be."

Be specific and informative.

- Vague feedback doesn't help athletes as much as concise, precise feedback.
- Instead of telling a diver who didn't rotate enough to try harder, say something more like "You didn't rotate enough on that dive; next time tuck tighter."
- And instead of "Nice one!" say "I like the way you caught the ball with both hands."

Focus on what you want athletes to improve.

- State what you want to happen: "Next time you do a bounce pass, I want you to extend your arms."
- Avoid talking about what you don't want to happen: "Stop dropping the ball" will only plant the suggestion to do just that!

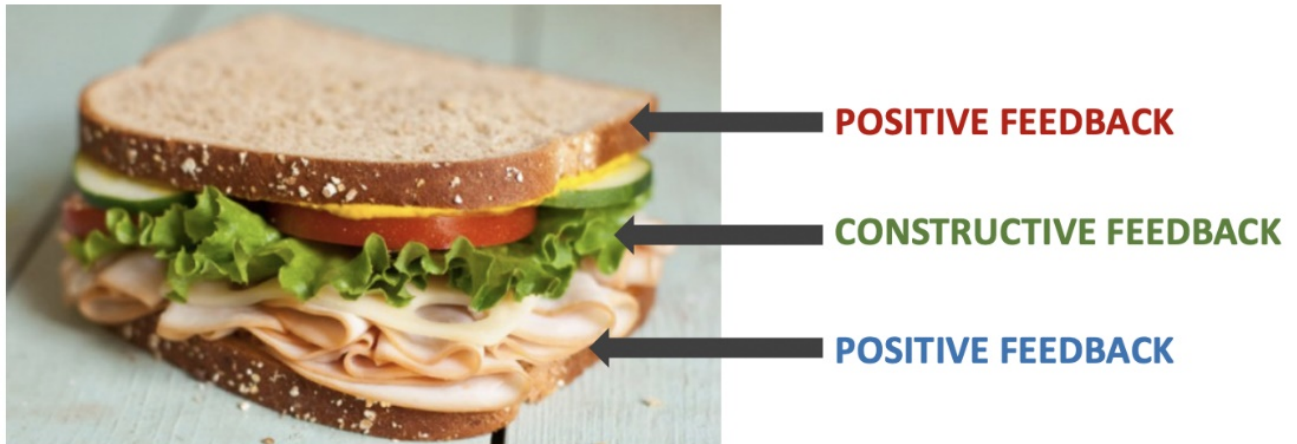


Target only what athletes can control.

- Give feedback only on the aspects of performance that athletes can actually change.

The Feedback Sandwich:

One way to give feedback is to frame it using the 'feedback sandwich'.



Using the 'feedback sandwich':

1. The coach first identifies something the athlete is doing well.
2. Then makes a specific and informative correction regarding something the athlete can try in order to improve the performance.
3. Finish the feedback with another encouraging statement to motivate the athlete and encouraging him/her to try again while the coach observes in order to improve.