



## Minor Hockey Development Guide

### **SKILL DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

### SKILL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP



## The Builder

### **ABC'S OF SUCCESS BELIEFS**

#### A. The Hockey Canada Skill Development Program

- ❖ **Initiation Program**
- ❖ **Hockey Canada Coaching Program - NCCP**
- ❖ **Hockey Canada Skills Development Program**
- ❖ **Coaches Club**
- ❖ **National Coach Mentorship Program**

#### B. The Importance of Skill Development

- ❖ **Thoughts from the Pros**
- ❖ **Skill Development Guidelines**
- ❖ **Why Skill Development?**
- ❖ **The Proof is in the Numbers**

#### C. Philosophy of Skill Development

- ❖ **Practice Tips**
- ❖ **Practice by the Numbers**
- ❖ **Coaching Tips**
- ❖ **Things to Consider – Coaches' Checklist**

#### D. What is Skill Development?

- ❖ **Offence**
- ❖ **Creativity**

#### E. Coaching Tools

#### F. Game Tips





## THE BUILDER

I saw a group of men in my hometown  
I saw a group of men tearing a building down.  
With a heave and a ho and a might yell,  
They swung a beam and the sidewalk fell.  
And I said to the foreman, “Are these men skilled,  
The type you’d hire if you wanted to build?”  
And he laughed and said, “Why no indeed.”  
He said “Common labour's all I need.

For I can tear down in a day or two  
What it took a builder ten years to do.”  
And I thought to myself as I walked away.  
“Which of these roles am I going to play?  
Am I the type that constantly tears down  
As I make my way, foolishly around?  
Or am I the type that’s trying to build with care,  
In hope that my organization’ll be glad I was there?”

Source: A Championship Season at Notre Dame,  
**Lou Holtz**





## A, B, C'S OF SUCCESS

### ABILITY

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“A winner is someone who sets his goals, commits himself to those goals and then pursues his goals with all the ability given him.”

“Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.”

John Wooden, Basketball Coach

### BREAKS

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“Luck is an opportunity seized upon.”

“The harder you work, the luckier you get.”

*Gary Player, Golfer*

### COURAGE

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“Never, Never, Never Quit!”

*Winston Churchill*

“To dream anything that you want to dream, that is the beauty of the human mind. To do anything you want to do, that is the strength of the human will. To trust yourself to test your limit, that is the courage to succeed.”

*Bernard Edmonds*





## BELIEFS

**“The secret to inspiration is aspiration.”**

<b>Be Positive</b>	“Your attitude determines your altitude.”	(Unknown)
<b>Work Harder</b>	“Paralyze resistance with persistence.”	Woody Hayes (Football)
<b>Role Model</b>	“People seldom improve when they have no other model but themselves to copy after.”	Goldsmith
<b>Clear Goals</b>	“A man without a goal is like a ship without a rudder, but a man with unrealistic goals is a man headed for trouble.”	Ben Kubassek
<b>Unlimited Desire</b>	“The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a man’s determination.”	(Unknown)





## **HOCKEY CANADA INITIATION PROGRAM**

**The Initiation Program is part of the  
Hockey Canada Skill Development Series –  
The Official Hockey Instructional Curriculum of Hockey Canada**

### **The Initiation Program teaches basic hockey skills - and much more!**

Hockey Canada's Initiation Program has 4 phases of instruction designed for beginning hockey players. Each level represents a different set of skill progression. At the beginning of the program, players are evaluated according to ability and placed in the appropriate program level.

Each phase consists of 8 lesson plans that follow a defined path of progression. As players move through the program, they improve on both hockey skills and self-confidence.

The program emphasizes the basic hockey skills: skating, puckhandling, passing and shooting.

Each skill is introduced and refined in a progressive - one step at a time manner.

Children learn and develop through participating in practice drills and informal and modified games (such as shinny, freezetag and obstacle courses).

Although the emphasis is on fun and progressive skill development, the Initiation Program also allows youngsters to experience:

- Fitness
- Fair Play
- Co-operation

For more information on the Hockey Canada's Initiation Program please contact Corey McNabb at [cmcnabb@hockeycanada.ca](mailto:cmcnabb@hockeycanada.ca).





## **HOCKEY CANADA SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

The Hockey Canada Skills Development Program consists of two components:

- 1) Hockey Canada Skills Development Camps
- 2) Hockey Canada Skills Development Coaching Manuals

The Hockey Canada Skills Development Camps were developed to provide players with an opportunity to enhance their fundamental skills in a positive, learning environment. The primary focus of the camp is centred around on-ice fundamental skills, with time scheduled for life skill enhancement in areas such as respect, fitness and teamwork.

The Hockey Canada Skills Development Camps are a one or two-day event, open to boys and girls playing in the Atom and Pee Wee divisions (9-12 years of age).

**“It is imperative in Canada that we focus on our youth development programs to ensure that every player gains a skill base and enjoys the game. The HC Skills Development Coaching Manuals have provided coaches with a valuable device, which will aid them in running excellent practices. The results of these programs will definitely be noticeable in the players of tomorrow.”**

**Mike Johnston**

Former Head Coach, Canadian National Men’s Team

The Hockey Canada Skills Development Coaching Manuals were developed under the guidance of Hockey Canada’s Coaching Committee. They are a curriculum based coaching manual, providing coaches with an easy to follow guide for teaching the fundamental skills.

The manuals are available in the Novice, Atom, Pee Wee, Bantam and Midget editions, along with a goaltender manual and small area games manual.





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**” Our coaches, and especially myself, found the Hockey Canada Skills Development Coaching Manuals an excellent tool for working with young players. We all found the manuals a terrific resource to organize your yearly coaching plan.”**

**Ken Hitchcock, Head Coach, St. Louis blues**

## **HOCKEY CANADA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM**

The National Coach Mentorship Program (NCMP) is an educational program developed by Hockey Canada and delivered by the 13 member Branches to ensure the mentoring of recreational, developmental and high performance coaches so they obtain the necessary skills to become effective teachers, leaders and organizers. Coaches, officials, parents and more importantly, the players all benefit from the NCMP. The program offers mentor coach training and certification at the volunteer and professional levels of the program. Please visit the Hockey Canada website at [www.hockeycanada.ca](http://www.hockeycanada.ca) for more information.



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## THE IMPORTANCE OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT

### 1. Thoughts from the Pro's

"Very few Jean Beliveau's or Paul Coffey's come through the ranks now because we're taught so many systems and so much discipline at a young age that we've taken away a lot of creativity."

*Wayne Gretzky*

"There is no use teaching team play, until the kids have reasonable mastery of skating, passing and puck control."

*Dr. Murray Smith – Sports Psychologist*

"You need to practice to become a better player. You see some kids playing 60 – 70 games, that's almost too much for a 15 or 16 old. When you are 6 to 10 or 6 to 12, you've got to be practicing all of the time. "

*Paul Kariya*

"When they have too many games when they are young, they are going out trying to fulfill a role and trying to not make mistakes, and as a result they get very little skill improvement."

*Dr. Murray Smith*





## 2. Skill Development Guidelines

**The Hockey Canada Initiation Program and the Hockey Canada Skills Development Program make up Hockey Canada's Skill Development Series –**

**The Official Hockey Instructional Curriculum of Hockey Canada**

- The Initiation Program recommends player development be built on practicing technical skills **85%** and individual tactics **15%**.
- The Hockey Canada Skills Development Program for Novice hockey recommends **75%** on technical skills, **15%** on individual tactics, and **10%** on team tactics.
- The Atom program recommends **50%** technical skills, **20%** individual tactics, **15%** team tactics, **10%** team play, and **5%** strategy.
- The Peewee program recommends **45%** technical skills, **20%** individual tactics, **15%** team tactics, **10%** team play, and **10%** strategy.
- The Bantam program recommends **40%** technical skills, **15%** individual tactics, **20%** team tactics, **15%** team play, and **10%** strategy.
- The Midget program recommends **35%** technical skills, **20%** individual tactics, **20%** team tactics, **15%** team play, and **10%** strategy.

**"Up to a certain age, kids should just be let out to play pond hockey.  
Skate and be creative with the puck,"**

**Wayne Gretzky**





### 3. Why Skill Development?

Skill Development plays a very important part of developing sound hockey players. But before looking at skills to be taught, it is important to review the “big picture” of skill development. Begin by answering the following questions:

1. How important is Skill Development?

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2. What purpose(s) does skill development serve?

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3. How much time should be spent on skill development?

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4. Can skill development be worked on in components or “chunks”?

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5. How much time to do spend on skill development?

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6. What types of drills do you use to improve skills?

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7. How can you change your practice / training sessions to improve skills?

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## 4. The Proof is in the Numbers

### A Game by the Numbers

The following statistics were recorded during a 60 minute Pee Wee level hockey game.

- Players will have the puck on their stick for an average of 8 seconds per game.
- Players will take an average of 1 - 2 shots per game.
- 95% of passes made backwards are successful.
- Players will take an average of 18 shifts per game.
- 99% of the feedback coaches give players is when they have the puck. Ironically, players only have the puck on their stick for 0.2% of the game.

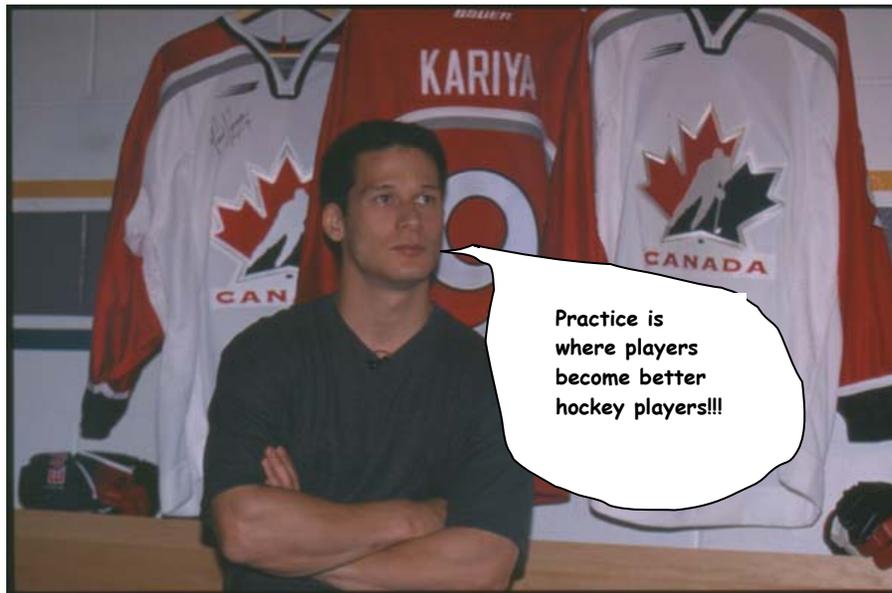
**“It’s important not to be too technical with kids, and just let them experience the joy of playing. Have them learn the skills of the game, more individual skills than team skills, that will come as they learn the game or watch the game on TV.”**

**Paul Kariya**





## THE PHILOSOPHY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT



**“In Canada, the four players without the puck depend on the puck carrier, in Russia the puckcarrier depends on the four players without the puck.”**

**Tarasov’s Comparison**





## 1. Practice Tips

### Courtesy of: Calgary Hockey Development

There are 10 Key Ingredients a coach should mix into each practice. Collectively these lead to enjoyment and learning for both players and coaches.

1. Coaches should have a minimum of **50 pucks** in their bucket.
2. Players **must be on time, all the time**. Coaches set the standard and lead by example. Parents must be encouraged to buy in.
3. **Don't waste ice time stretching**. Stretching should be performed in the dressing room prior to the ice time.
4. The **use of stations** in practices leads to a dynamic practice. Stations keep participants active enabling them to achieve high levels of repetitions. Have players spend 3 - 8 minutes per station before switching. 2 - 3 stations are recommended. (Must be a coach at each station)
5. **Basic Skill Development** (skating, puck control, passing, shooting) should comprise 90% of your practice time. Remember you can work skills in game-like drills. Skill Development should not be considered boring.
6. **Positive and Specific Feedback** are imperative. Consider the Head Coach who always stands at center ice and runs drills. How often during the practice is this coach able to effectively teach??? Teaching is done in the trenches (corners, lines).
7. **Routines in practice are dangerous**. Players will pace themselves and become bored very quickly. Routine practices develop great practice players. Strive to change things up, create an element of surprise, utilize variety, and generate enthusiasm. Players also enjoy time on their own. 2 - 5 minutes per practice should be sufficient. This enables players to be creative and try new things.
8. "TELL ME AND I'LL FORGET, SHOW ME AND I MIGHT REMEMBER, INVOLVE ME AND I'LL UNDERSTAND"
9. **Practice Execution** by coaches is of principle importance. Great drills that aren't executed properly by coaches are useless. Execution involves using all staff on the ice, having pucks spotted in the proper areas, informing players of the whistle sequence (1<sup>st</sup> whistle begin, 2<sup>nd</sup> whistle stop, 3<sup>rd</sup> whistle begins next group) and providing appropriate feedback. To assist in practice execution, name your drills i.e. "Killer Bees".

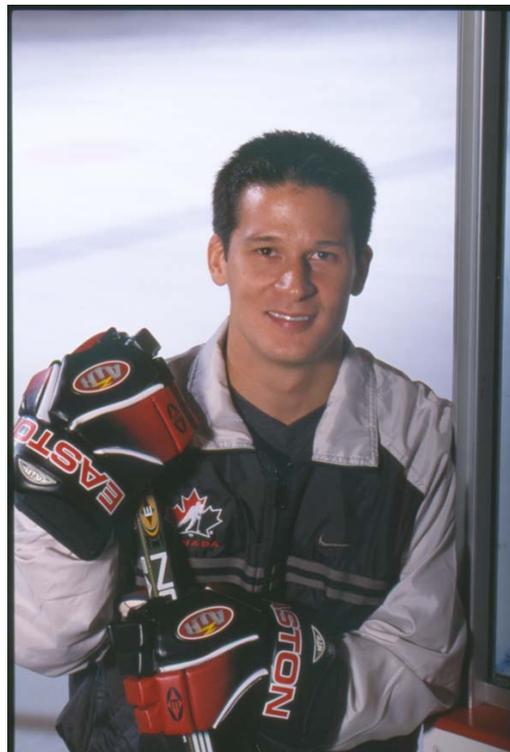




10. Relate what you do in **practices to games** and vice versa. “Players, we are doing this drill because in our last game we were unable to finish around the net.” or “This drill will assist you in keeping your stick and body away from the checker and in an effective scoring position.”

“Well I think 2 to 1 or 3 to 1 practice to games is the way to go. In practice, that’s where you become a better hockey player. You get to have the puck on your stick more, and take more shots on net than in any game. Even as a professional you don’t have the puck on your stick that much, and at a young age it’s crucial to develop your skills, you can’t do that in an organized game.”

Paul Kariya





## 2. Practice by the Numbers

### Statistics supplied by: Calgary Hockey Development

The following facts and figures relate to a 60 minute practice session.

- 1 **efficient** practice will give a player more skill development than 11 games collectively.
- Each player should have a puck on their stick for 8 - 12 minutes.
- Each player should have a minimum of 30 shots on goal.
- Players will miss the net over 30% of the time in a minor hockey practice.
- Coaches should try to run 4 - 5 different drills / games / activities each practice. More is not better; **execution** of what you do is development.
- No more than 5 minutes should be spent in front of a teaching board each practice.
- If you have 10 players on the ice, strive to keep 4 - 5 players moving at all times.
- If you have 15 players on the ice, strive to keep 9 - 10 players moving at all times.
- If you have 20 players on the ice, strive to keep 14 - 15 players moving at all times.





### 3. Coaching Tips

#### Communicating With Your Players

Ongoing communication with your players will be easier if you have taken the time at the beginning of the season to talk about goals, outline your approach, and answer questions.

Here are a few simple tips to help you communicate effectively with your players during practices and games:

- Arrange players in a semi-circle in front of you.
- Position them so there are no distractions behind you.
- Scan your group as you talk. Make eye contact with all players.
- Ask questions to make sure players have understood you and know what is expected of them.
- Give your players an opportunity to ask questions
- Listen to what they say and how they say it.
- Speak to them using words they understand (keep it simple).
- Bend down, kneel or crouch so you can talk to them at their level.
- Speak to every player at every session.

\*\*\*Outline your rules for the ice sessions at the beginning of the year. \*\*\*

#### Giving Feedback

Providing feedback for your players is critical in developing skills. Always remember these four points:

- Give the “good” picture. Demonstrate what you want, not what the player is doing incorrectly.
- Be positive. Acknowledge what is being done well, then point out what should be worked on.
- Be specific. Demonstrate exactly what it is you want done.
- Don’t forget your goaltender(s), they require equal feedback.





## Skill Learning

Here is a good teaching sequence to follow:

1. Explain the skill
  - name the skill and describe it
  - tell why it's important and when it's used. Highlight the key teaching points (key words or phrases used in instructing and giving feedback to your players)
  
2. Show how it is done (can be skipped if the drill is being done regularly)
  - demonstrate
  - state key points again
  
3. Give time to practice
  - get players to practice the skill right away
  - get everyone involved
  
4. Tell them how they're doing
  - move around to each player
  - give individual feedback
  - get assistants to help





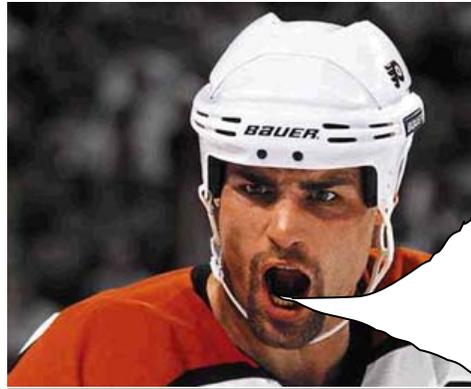
#### **4. Things to Consider – Coaches Checklist**

- Did you set goals and objectives for the practice?
- Do your drills have a specific purpose and meet the goals of the practice?
- Are your drills suitable to the age and skill level of your players?
- Does your practice have general progressions from individual skills to team play?
- Are your drills applicable to the skills used in games?
- Do you teach new skills and drills early in the practice?
- Do your drills challenge the skill level of the players?
- Do you keep all players active including the goaltenders?
- Do you give clear and concise instructions?
- Do you have the attention of your athletes when you speak to them?
- Do you explain and demonstrate skills and drills clearly?
- Do you inform your assistant coaches and use effectively? Did you keep them active in all drills?
- Did you use the entire ice surface available to you? ( Full or half ice)
- Do you observe, evaluate and give feedback throughout the practice?
- Do you keep the drills effective, competitive, active and challenging?
- Are you positive and upbeat?
- Do you greet the players by their first names before practice?
- Do you include a warm-up and cool down in each practice?
- Do you include a fun drill in each practice?
- Do you stop drills when general error or a lack of effort is apparent?
- Do you do your conditioning drills at or near the end of practice?
- Do you speak to players as a group at the end of practice about the practice, upcoming games or general information?
- Do you allow time for players to work on / practice specific skills individually?
- Do you communicate individually with each of your players throughout practice?
- Do you emphasize fun?





## WHAT IS SKILL DEVELOPMENT?



**More  
Practice  
Less Games**

### SKILL DEVELOPMENT IS EQUAL PARTS OFFENCE AND CREATIVITY

#### 1. Offence

- Read and react is the most important skill – do it quickly, it'll make an average player a great player
- Support the puck carrier by moving to open ice
- Create an attack triangle – support the puck carrier on two sides
- Communicate to your teammates
- Protect the puck with your body, shield it away from your opponents
- Keep control of the puck, don't just give it away
- Use the boards to pass to yourself and to your teammates

**“Taking risks is a big part of playing offence. Self-confident coaches promote taking risks and trying new ideas.”**





### Keys to Offence

- Slow down to a speed where you can think ( create )
- Don't limit yourself
- Have the courage to make mistakes
- Let the puck do the work
- Support
- Move to open ice
- Have desire and passion for playing instead of winning

**“The reason that Pavel Bure is such a good player, and fun to watch, is that he is not scared to try things. He might only be successful 2 or 3 times out of ten, but when he is, it is a highlight reel goal.”**

**Don Cherry**

### Offensive Team Principles

- Play for possession
- Use everybody on the attack
- Use lateral and circular skating patterns versus linear
- Be in constant motion and vary your speed
- Move with purpose ( Support Position )
- Be an option more than once
- Be at the right place at the right time
- Always think one pass ahead
- Be deceptive and creative, not predictable





### Tips for an Offensive Practice

- Increase the number of passes in each drill
- Play “ keep away “ style games with purpose
- Have segments in practice where players just play, no instruction, only positive feedback.
- Work on puck control skills every practice, to increase their confidence ( Drills out of their comfort zone )
- Have give away rules, so the players get used to playing with possession
- Praise the offensive play, when a goal is scored – not the defensive mistake.
- Have at least one flow drill in each practice, emphasizing timing, passing and support.

### 2. Creativity

- Practice being creative during practices and free time – i.e. puck handling, 1 on 1's, 2 on 1's, 2 on 2's, 3 on 2's etc.
- You never know if something works until you try it
- Have the players challenge themselves – if it doesn't work the first time, keep trying
- Use the whole ice surface to your advantage – boards, back of net

**” There is too much emphasis on "systems" and not enough on creativity. It's stifling, “**

**Wayne Gretzky**





## **PRACTICE PLANNING**

With the advent of the Hockey Canada Skills Development Manuals, coaches no longer need to spend a lot of effort and time in developing drills and practice plans.

For those of you who wish to design your own practice plans, here are a few things to consider:

Skill Development can be a straightforward task once you have taken the time to develop a practice or seasonal plan. A practice / seasonal plan is made up of a number of important components that should be given strong consideration each time you develop a plan.

1. Practice plan format to record your plan
2. Measurable outcomes for the plan
3. Elements of the plan
4. Assign the coach responsible to lead the drill(s)
5. Clear illustrations
6. Descriptions to include





1. Practice plan format to record your plan:
  - meets all your needs for information
  - archive your plans for easy reference at a later date
  
2. Measurable outcomes for the plan:
  - players of all ages need to know the goals of each practice
  - record information about the execution of the plan
  
3. Elements of the plan:
  - practices / drills should be more active than passive
  - a well balanced practice contains about 5 activities
  - elements of a plan may include warm up, teaching components, technical skill execution, drills under game like conditions, fun elements, competitive activities, and a cool down
  
4. Assign the coach responsibilities to lead the drill:
  - ensure that all support people understand the purpose of the drills so they can provide appropriate feedback to guide improvement
  - all coaches should be engaged in the delivery of each drill
  - coaches may be required to provide stimuli to start or maintain drill focus
  
5. Clear illustrations:
  - take pride in illustrating good plans
  - make it a habit to use international symbols
  
6. Descriptions to include:
  - written descriptions should include details of the drill execution, key teaching points, and key execution points
  - plans should note any extraordinary equipment required





## GAME TIPS

### Before the Game

#### Encourage players to develop the following routine for themselves:

- Have players “park” all distractions (clear the mind) and have them focus on how they want to perform during the game.
- Have players decide they will finish the game knowing they have given everything to give • there’s no reason to save anything for later!
- Players should take 5 minutes to think about the best games and shifts they have ever played • tell them “You are at least as good as your best-ever shifts, and probably a lot better!”
- Have players get a positive picture in their mind of what they want to do when they hit the ice
  - Imagine doing it well. Then do it!

### During the Game

#### Encourage players to develop the following routine for themselves:

- Before each shift decide to create opportunities and make something happen.
- During every shift, focus on doing the little things that allow you to play your best.
- Extend yourself by generating maximum effort.
- Push your limits and see what happens.
- When you finish the game, know you have given everything you have.
- NO REGRETS!

