

Age Appropriate Hockey Training

A Hockey Coaching Tool from Greg Siller of Pro Learning Systems

Coaches must understand that hockey skills need to be taught at an appropriate pace according to the **Ability, Age, Physical, and Mental Development (AAPMD) level** of each player as well as the overall team. The AAPMD level determines the stage of hockey aptitude and maturity for a specific player and the team, and at what level and pace skills should be taught.

Knowing the AAPMD level of your players will help to determine their hockey aptitude and maturity, what type of training is appropriate for the players, and at what rate to teach them. This means that learning opportunities need to be constructed differently for teams consisting of young children, teenagers, or adults. They will also need to be tailored differently for different types of teams—such as recreational, tournament, or travel teams. The level of play (novice, intermediate, or advanced) also needs to be factored into the practice strategy as well.



Coach Greg Working with a Variety of High School Players

To determine a player's AAPMD level, you will need several pieces of information from your players—age, height, weight, and grade that they are in (for school-age players). Information on a player's mental makeup can generally be observed over the course of several practices, games, or during tryouts (if your team has conducted them). Is the player showing leadership tendencies? Is he tentative in his play or is he aggressive? Is she adding a positive influence to the team or does she create distractions. In addition, it is essential that you merge this information with data from player assessments, questionnaires, or pre-season discussions to get a more complete AAPMD player profile.

The following pages show a sample completed AAPMD Level Profile as well as a blank Profile that coaches can use for their own assessments.

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Age, Ability, Physical and Mental Development (AAPMD) Level Profile of Your Players

Player Name	Wayne Gretzky
Player Age	14
Player Height	5' 4"
Player Weight	145 lbs
Grade (if in school)	8th
Non-Hockey Sporting Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport • Number of Years Played • Level of Play • Positions Played 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseball • 4 years • First-tier competitive level (post-rec) • Pitcher, 2nd base
Hockey Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Years Played • Level of Play • Positions Played 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 years • Recreational and competitive (travel and tournament) • Left Wing, Center, Goaltender
Mental Make-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive, Tentative? • Confident? • Positive or negative influence? • Competitive? • How does the player handle winning/losing? • Does the player demonstrate leadership? • Does the player exhibit teamwork, sportsmanship, respect? • How quickly does the player learn? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate-to-Aggressive tendencies (certainly passionate about the game) • Very confident (not overly) • Creates a positive influence with the team • Very competitive. Wants to be out on every shift • Enjoys winning. Gets frustrated when losing. Shares responsibility for both losing and winning • Quiet leader. Leads by example • Good teamwork and sportsmanship. Has respect for the game, his team and himself. • Wayne picks up new concepts immediately (like a sponge)
Additional information from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Player Assessments • Questionnaires • Player Discussions • Observations 	Wayne has innate physical and mental hockey skills. He “gets” the game of hockey. What he lacks in physical size, he more than makes up in determination, visualization, and anticipation. If Wayne continues on his current path, he will have an excellent chance to crack the NHL soon and will certainly make his mark at that level as he is doing at his current level.

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Hockey Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of Years Played• Level of Play• Positions Played	
Mental Make-up <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aggressive, Tentative?• Confident?• Positive or negative influence?• Competitive?• How does the player handle winning/losing?• Does the player demonstrate leadership?• Does the player exhibit teamwork, sportsmanship, respect?• How quickly does the player learn?	
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