



HOCKEY CANADA INITIATION PROGRAM

Messengers' Program Presentation Guide

August 15, 2016





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Messengers' Presentation



“DEVELOPING SKILLS FIRST”

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is designed to support a variety of personnel including clinic facilitators, minor hockey association initiation program coordinators, and program administrators. **Anyone who is responsible for presenting Initiation Program information to parents, coaches, and minor hockey executives should find this material useful in preparing their presentation.**

This presentation is offered as a guideline and is intended to provide a starting point to building effective messaging to the groups being presented to. The PowerPoint file can be adjusted to suit personal presentation styles with the foundation and core messages of the Initiation Program and importance within the Hockey Canada player development framework being highlighted.

INTRODUCTION

“How a player gets that first taste of hockey is crucial”.

If the beginner has fun, develops some basic skills and builds confidence, there is a good chance that player will go on to enjoy hockey for many years. But if a beginner has an unhappy, unrewarding experience, the chances are that he, or she, will quit at an early age and never discover the real joy of Canada's great game. Every hockey beginner should have access to the Initiation Program!

Almost all local hockey associations organize house leagues and/or rep teams. But more and more MHAs are also delivering the Initiation Program, because it is obvious that unprepared beginners who are put directly into playing the game are at a distinct disadvantage to youngsters who have had the benefits of experiencing the Initiation Program.

The goal of Hockey Canada is to see the day when every youngster across Canada getting started in hockey will have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the Initiation Program.

To provide the optimal experience to beginner players and their parents, every minor hockey association in Canada should be providing the Initiation Program.

It comes down to this! A minor hockey association's Initiation Program serves as the foundation upon which the entire minor hockey association is built. Youngsters at every level of play in female and minor hockey, benefit from getting the “right start” in the game. The Initiation Program is crucial in building the skills of house league and rep team players alike.



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In the summer of 1995, Hockey Canada passed a motion requiring the Initiation Program to be implemented by every Minor Hockey Association across the country and to change their constitution/bylaws to reflect the creation of a new division in hockey.

Hockey Canada developed the Initiation Program to make children's first contact with hockey a safe and positive experience. It's a structured, learn to play hockey program designed to introduce beginners to the game's basic skills. It enables participants to become contributing members of a team effort, develop self-confidence, and experience a sense of personal achievement. These goals are achieved in an atmosphere of fun and fair play.

"Learning the basic skills at young age will set the foundation for everything a player will accomplish in the game of hockey. These skills are learned in practice through the Initiation Program." Corey McNabb, Director of Player and Coach Development.

THE INITIATION PROGRAM

The future of hockey lies with today's youth. Because of this, Hockey Canada developed the Initiation Program as a way to encourage the growth of foundational skills for the young player in hockey. Minor hockey associations and coaches lead the implementation of the Initiation Program with the assistance of young volunteers, parents and others associated with hockey. The program provides opportunities for a wide range of people to get involved in order to improve the quality of the hockey experience through sound instruction and enjoyable play.

The success of the Initiation Program is measured by the level of development young players achieve. To optimize these levels of development, dedicated adults must play a large role as leaders and teachers who will create a challenging and motivating environment for all young players.

The goals and objectives of the Initiation Program are to:

- Teach basic hockey skills so players can enjoy the game.
- Assist in the development and enhancement of physical literacy and basic motor patterns.
- Develop and encourage the concept of team, through player participation in on and off-ice activities.
- Encourage fitness, fair play and co-operation aspects within the fun of the game.

About Hockey Canada's Initiation Program

- The Initiation Program is a progressive learn to play teaching curriculum. Children learn through participating in practice drills as well as informal and modified games such as shinny, freeze tag, and obstacle courses.



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- The program consists of 4 Phases of Instruction, designed for the beginning hockey players. Each phase consists of a series of lesson plans that follow a defined path of progressions.
- The skills of skating, puck control, passing and shooting are introduced and refined in a progressive “one step at a time” manner.
- Although the emphasis is on fun and fundamental skill development, the Initiation Program also allows youngsters to experience fitness, fair play and cooperation.
- To ensure a positive experience for the children, a 4-hour instructional clinic has been designed for the on-ice instructors (coaches) that focus on communication, teaching skills, leadership, skill analysis, lesson organization and safety and risk management.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Initiation Program is Canada’s premiere “Developing Skills First” program for beginning hockey players.

- Hockey Canada developed the program to ensure that the child’s first contact with hockey is a safe and positive experience.
- The program enables participants to become contributing members of a team effort, develop self-confidence, and experience a sense of personal achievement.

PROGRAM GOALS

- To have fun while playing hockey and engaging in physical activity.
- To learn the fundamental skills required to play the game of hockey.
- To create and refine basic motor patterns.
- To be introduced to the concepts of cooperation and fair play.

COMPONENTS

1) Administrators Guide

The purpose of the Administrators Guide is to acquaint local hockey organizers with the Hockey Canada Initiation Program, and how to put the program to good use in your association.

This guide includes an overview of the Hockey Canada model programs, information on setting up the initiation program, getting your parents onside, and the importance of instructor training.

2) Instructor Manual

The Instructors manual was designed to give coaches all of the necessary information needed to teach hockey skills to beginners.



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Some of the areas discussed are leadership, communication, teaching skills and lesson organization. Each of these components contains valuable information when it comes time to implement each of the Lesson Manuals.

3) Lesson Plans (Ice Sessions)

The Initiation Program Ice Sessions are a compilation of ideas from many top hockey people across Canada. Prior to publication, the Initiation Program lesson plans were tested in several provinces in communities with widely differing circumstances and found to be very effective. The IP Lesson Plans are available through the Hockey Canada Network or the Hockey Canada Skills Manual Series. These lessons map out easy to follow ice sessions. Beginning hockey players progress throughout these ice sessions to the point where they can start playing hockey and enjoying it.

The plans are designed to serve as a model for on ice delivery. Minor hockey associations are not required to follow each ice session exactly as planned, but the development of these resources take in to account the needs of young girls and boys who are new to hockey and on the road to building a sound set of hockey skills. Each minor hockey association should use these lesson plans based on the unique situation of the initiation program elements, i.e. numbers, available ice, etc.

The intended goal of the Initiation Program materials is to provide program instructors with an instructional framework that will provide beginners with the benefits of a very good start in hockey.

The **Hockey Canada Network**[™] is an iOS and Android APP that contains a wealth of information for coaches and instructors. The entire series of Hockey Canada Skills Manuals and the Skills of Gold DVD series is available on the Hockey Canada Network. This includes the entire series of lesson plans designed specifically for the Initiation Program.

4) Cross Ice Hockey

At times, there can be concerns from parents about possibly delaying their child's hockey development. But parents need to think long term and not worry too much about their child being the best player on the ice at the age of 5 or 6 years old. It is also to remind parents that putting young players in to a competitive environment to early, will compromise their development. Children need to be placed in to competitive situations that suit their age appropriate abilities. And parents need to be realistic about what children should be able to do all age levels. This is why Hockey Canada's Long Term Player Development strategy is so important.

It is important to fully understand and appreciate the benefits of cross ice hockey. The configuration of dividing the playing surface into cross-ice or half ice is a decision that can be made at the local level. An overview of very simple statistics illustrates a number of advantages to the smaller surface games model.



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- Increases the emphasis on skating skills including elements like agility, balance, coordination and quickness.
- Number of puck battles increases significantly.
- Puck control and puck protection skills are enhanced which will help players succeed at higher levels.
- All the fundamental skills of skating, puck control, passing, and shooting are reinforced at a greater rate through game play.
- The increase in incidental body contact requires players to play with their head up, better preparing players for proper use of body contact and checking skills in the future.
- Less time and space increases the frequency of making hockey decisions. better environment for teaching ice awareness and boosts hockey sense.
- Better environment for teaching ice awareness and boosts hockey sense.
- Over time, the intensity level of competition increases with the progressive skill improvement of players.

5) NCCP Community Coach Stream - The Initiation Clinic

The Clinic for instructors that is given as part of the Initiation Program is available from coast to coast that the instructors need to consider in terms of their approach to children; as well as giving instruction in the delivery of the program itself.

The Community Coach Stream clinic is part of the new on-line NCCP Coaching Clinic available through Hockey University

Recognizing the necessity to provide a positive experience for beginning hockey players, the Initiation Program builds upon a number of values providing a qualitative experience, which include:

- Providing a safe environment in which to be introduced to ice hockey's fundamental skills.
- Developing an understanding of basic teamwork through participation in structured activities and adapted game like situations.
- Introducing participants to the concepts of fair and co-operative play.
- Refining basic motor patterns and building self-confidence.
- Providing an environment that challenges individuals positively and rewards the participants for their efforts.
- Providing opportunities to experience a number of activities related in the building of a lifestyle of fitness and activity.

Community Coach Stream Clinic Target Audience

- Leadership is a key component to the Initiation Program. Parents volunteer their time as instructors and administrators, providing a positive, non-competitive experience for all children.
- As instructors they are responsible to be effective leaders and teachers, acting as role models for cooperation and fair play.



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- As administrators, parents are responsible to organize the details that lead to the on-ice sessions, such as promotion of the program, registration, booking ice times and communicating with parents regarding schedules.

CALL TO ACTION

1. Identify Program Champions

Strong and sustainable leadership is key.

“A champion calls others to action and motivates their peers to work toward improving the quality of programming in their minor hockey association.”

- Identifying future program champions (future program leaders) is an important part of the current program leaders' legacy and ensuring the sustainability of the program in to the future. The program champion is a community leader who has the credibility and influence with peers.
- A key element of the identifying community champions is to ensure these future leaders also recognize their role in continuing the process and making sure there are program champions to follow in the follow steps as well. As future program champions are identified, it will be necessary to host an orientation meeting to set these individuals up for the successful handoff of Initiation Program responsibilities.

2. Build A Resource Plan

Each MHA must have their own resource plan:

- **Promoting Systematic Development**
 - ❖ Resource development is based on a “systems view” of a program. It addresses the development of the initiation Program in terms of the minor hockey association's beliefs, goals and objectives. In other words, the plan creates and influences the systems used to implement, monitor, and sustain the Initiation Program.
- **The Ability to Successfully Navigate Change**
 - ❖ The pace of change in society today may demand that minor hockey associations have the ability to navigate change quickly and effectively. Flexibility and adaptation is a critical component to resource development planning. The days of five year plans are over for most organizations. But navigating change and being flexible does not simply mean reinventing programming in response to the latest trend. It does not mean you abandon your mission to pursue the “flavour of the month”. Successfully navigating change is about creating a stable path for a minor hockey association to carry out its mission, in spite of the pressures of the external environment.
- **Encouraging Sustainable and Rational Growth**
 - ❖ Resource development is only tenable when growth makes sense for the organization. When a program grows too quickly, there is a potential to lose a sense of mission, and often, with minor hockey association volunteers stretched too thin, program plans suffer and the program starts to unravel. Steady, patient growth (and change) will allow for a sound implementation plan.

3. Become a Messenger

There are many ways to promote positive messaging, and it will be important to “craft your message”:

- Be clear on what message is about
- Keep it simple and focussed



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- Use positive language
- Tailor message to the audience
- Appeal to audience's self-interest
- Make the case for the message being shared
- Address the problem(s), the solution(s) and the benefit(s)
- Be consistent
- Distribute clear, concise position statements
- Use evidence - facts carry more weight than anecdotal evidence

4. Embrace Your Role

Everyone's role is key to program success:

"Sometimes the greatest challenge is coming to grips with your role on the team." Scottie Pippen, Chicago Bulls

- Understanding and accepting roles is one of the biggest areas for developing a successful team. The obvious problem with getting individuals to play roles is that certain roles have more outside appeal than others.
- One of the biggest obstacles for getting individuals to accept and embrace less popular roles but each of these roles is absolutely critical to a team's success. Successful minor hockey associations have personnel who not only accept their specific role, but also understand their overall significance and value to the desired outcomes. "The key to teamwork is to learn a role, accept that role, and strive to become excellent at fulfilling the role."

5. Broadcast Your Stories

There are many great stories and these need to be celebrated:

- Almost every TEDtalk starts with the speaker telling some first-hand experience that shaped the information that follows in their talk. Good marketers have used stories to get consumers to do what they want for years — look at any commercial that doesn't show the product it's selling, except maybe at the very end, once the story finishes.
- Elements of a good story may include things like keeping it simple, illustrating emotion, truthful, it's a first hand experience that is real, and it validates the topic being addressed.

CONCLUSION

- The Initiation Program is focus on children aged 5 and 6, but is useful for any entry-level hockey player.
- Annually, the number of registered girls and boys at the ages of 5 and 6 years old registered with Hockey Canada is 74,000
- These 74,000 players make up approximately 15% of all registered female and minor players in the Hockey Canada system, which make up approximately 4,500 teams.
- Approximately 15,000 instructors (coaches) are engaged each season to teach at the Initiation level.
- Hockey Canada has approximately 3000 Minor Hockey Associations who receive education and resources outlining the benefits of participating in the Initiation Program, and are encouraged to deliver it in their minor hockey association.



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- The benefits of delivering the Initiation Program across Canada are many. The future of hockey lies within minor hockey development programs.
- Hockey Canada plays an important role in ensuring minor hockey associations have the necessary resources and tools to support beginning hockey players in developing the fundamental skills and attitudes to play the game and to foster an enjoyment of hockey as a lifetime participation sport.

Initiation Program Presentation: Speaker Notes



Initiation Program 'Champions' Presentation

Title Slide to be customized for Branch Facilitator use:

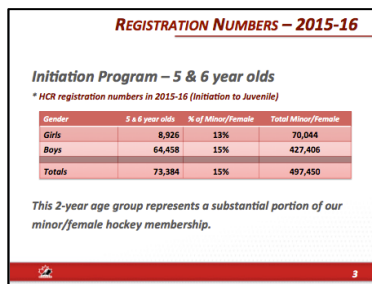
- Similar to the closing slide, this slide should contain information about the presenter. The Branch logo should be inserted to the right of the divider line separating the presenter's name from the logo.



Approved Recommendations

The Hockey Canada Board of Directors' Commitment:

- The Hockey Canada Board of Directors made a bold statement in May of 2016 by fully endorsing a national plan to re-energize the Initiation Program
- The 5 recommendations listed on this clearly articulate what the Board of Directors feel is required to ensure the successful implementation of the program.



Registration Numbers Highlight the Importance

The volume of young girls and boys in this age group:

- Annually, the number of registered girls and boys at the ages of 5 and 6 years old registered with Hockey Canada is 74,000
- These 74,000 players make up approximately 15% of all registered female and minor players in the Hockey Canada system, which make up approximately 4,500 teams.



Why Children Play Hockey

Researching sport participation tells sport administrators quite a lot:

- Several resource papers have been published in the past few years that highlight the importance of sport in society today.
- "Sport has a unique power to attract, mobilize and inspire. By its very nature, sport is about participation. It is about inclusion and citizenship." (The United Nations on Sport for Development and Peace)

Why the Initiation Program?

The program serves as the gateway to all hockey skills!



The History of the Initiation Program

Participants should have an understanding the both the importance or and the history of the Initiation Program:

- Hockey Canada developed the Initiation Program to make a child's first contact with hockey a safe and positive experience. It's a structured, learn-to-play hockey program designed to introduce beginners to the game's basic skills.

An innovative program approach . . .

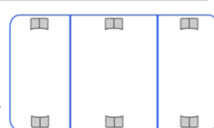
- ♦ **FUNdamental sports skills:**
 - ♦ Introduced through fun games
 - ♦ Age appropriate skills programming
- ♦ **FUNdamental hockey skills:**
 - ♦ Basic overall game skills
 - ♦ Skills in combination over time

Fundamental Skills Are Critical to Player Enjoyment

The Initiation Program address fundamental skill development in an age appropriate manner:

- The Initiation Program enables participants to become contributing members of a team effort, develop self-confidence, and experience a sense of personal achievement.
- Over time, players will develop their "hockey" skills based on the continuous improvement of the fundamental skills of skating, passing, puck control, and shooting.

No limitations on how to use ice . . .



Cross-ice hockey:


- ♦ 3 games
- ♦ 2 games and a skills area
- ♦ 2 games and a rest area

Cross Ice Hockey in 3 Zones

There are many options on how to configure the ice:

- In some cases, the ice can be divided in to three zones for small area games, cross ice games or skill instruction stations.
- Barriers separating the zones create 3 unique and distinct playing surfaces.

The difference . . .



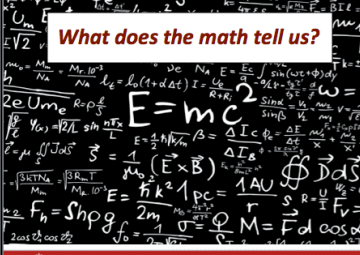
Cross-ice hockey **Half-ice hockey**

Cross Ice & Half Ice Set-ups

There is a difference between cross ice and half ice:

- Whether an association is using either foam dividers or the cross ice portable boards, if the ice is completely divide by these barriers, two game and/or practices can take place uninterrupted.

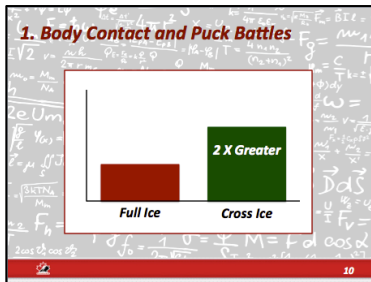
What does the math tell us?



Statistical Review of Small Area Games and Cross Ice Hockey

All sports take the time to understand the difference with small spaces:

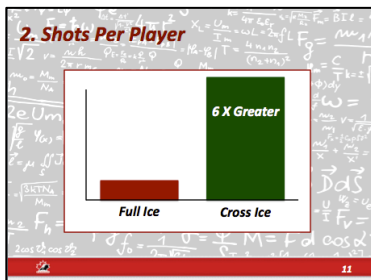
- There are a number of elements of the game that are positively impacted by young players competing in a smaller space.
- Many coaches of older players will confirm these facts about enhanced skills development in smaller spaces.



Contact and Puck Battles

Cross-ice or small area completion:

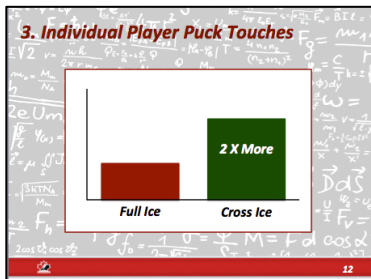
- Players are 'more' engaged in the play when the space is smaller. This means they are closer to the puck and closer to the other players at all time.
- All players are in the middle of the play more often when the space is limited, enhancing the player's opportunity to improve in many skill areas of the game.



Shots Per Player

A very large difference between full ice and small areas:

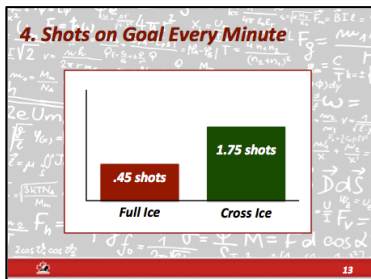
- There are 6 times as many shots on goal or at goal in a cross-ice or half ice game.
- Players are closer to the puck at all times and the puck finds its way to the net much more often



Puck Touches

Small spaces means more engaged in the play:

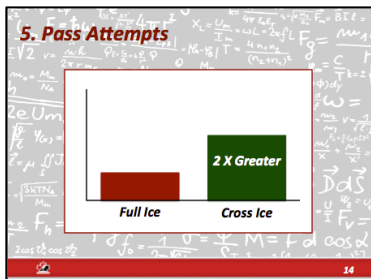
- All players are close to the play at all times and have much more opportunity for puck touches. Regardless of the skill level or the ability of each player, their opportunities to be engaged in the play increase by double when the playing area is smaller.



Shots on Goal

Shrinking the playing surface increases offense:

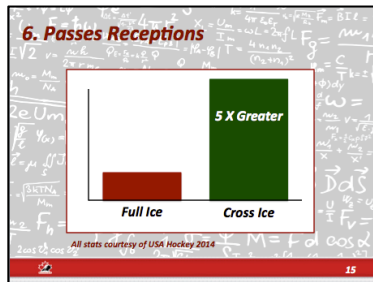
- Players are much closer to the nets, skate shorter distance from goal to goal, and have increased opportunities for offensive play.



Pass Attempts

More of a team game is apparent:

- In the smaller area games, players are observed passing and attempting to pass the puck more often. This results for two reasons:
 - All players are close enough to pressure the puck more frequently
 - Teammates are in close support of the puck carry at all times



Pass Receptions

Short quick passes find their mark:

- In smaller spaces, more passes are attempted and most of these passes are 5 to 10 feet in length.
- When passes are shorter, accuracy improves and players tend to have more success receiving the pass.
- Players also start to understand the important of team puck possession.



An Important Message About Youth Sports

Mike Matheny, Manager of the St. Louis Cardinals Baseball Club:

- There is a lot to learn across all sports.
- Mike Matheny shares an important message to parents on their roles as "supportive sport parents". And talks about the important lessons learned from his coaches, especially those who focused on developing him as a player instead of winning a specific game
- Mike also wrote a book called "The Matheny Manifesto: A Young Manager's Old-School Views on Success in Sports and Life"



Dangers of Early Sport Specialization

The importance of understanding the 'pitfalls' of early sport specialization.

- In May of 2015 the **International Olympic Committee** released a consensus statement on youth athletic development. With an increase in competitiveness and professionalization within youth sport, the intensified and expanded physical training and increased competition volume and frequency with insufficient allocation of time for rest and recovery. One serious consequence is the escalation in sport-related injuries and health problems at all levels of youth sport including overuse injury, overtraining and burnout.



The Current Minor Hockey Landscape

We need to recognize the challenges in the game today:

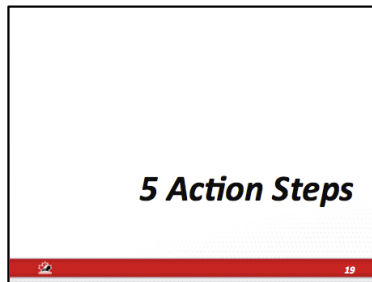
- 4 reasons parents are not enrolling their young daughters and sons in hockey:
 - The perceived expense of hockey
 - The perceived amount of time hockey consumes
 - The perceived lack of enjoyment
 - The perceived lack of a safe environment



The Importance of Messaging to Parents

All roads lead to the parents:

- Consider the infrastructure of a minor hockey association. All people engaged in the day-to-day operations of administration, coaching, and managing are parents.
- Including the parents of active players, all most all people associated are parents



5 Actions Steps for Your Minor Hockey Association

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants should be able to take one or more action steps listed below:

- This is the **"call to action"**. Review the notes presented earlier for more detailed descriptions of how to approach the action steps below.



Identify Program Champions

Strong and sustainable leadership is key:

- "A champion calls others to action and motivates their peers to work toward improving the quality of programming in their minor hockey association."



Build A Resource Plan

Each MHA must have their own resource plan:

- Promote Systematic Development
- Demonstrate the Ability to Successfully Navigate Change
- Encourage Sustainable and Rational Growth



Become a Messenger

There are many ways to promote positive messaging, and it will be important to "craft your message":

- Take the steps necessary to personalize your message – and convey your message with passion and a spirited belief in the importance of the message.
- This will require being well read and well informed on the benefits of the Initiation Program



Embrace Your Role

Everyone's role is key to program success:

"Sometimes the greatest challenge is coming to grips with your role on the team." Scottie Pippen, Chicago Bulls

- Understanding and accepting roles is one of the biggest areas for developing a successful team. The obvious problem with getting individuals to play roles is that certain roles have more outside appeal than others.



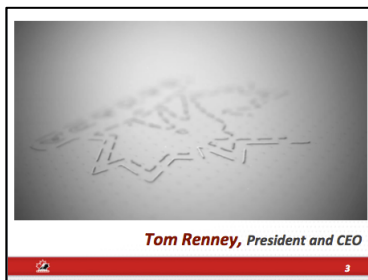
Broadcast Your Stories

There are many great stories and these need to be celebrated:

- Almost every TEDtalk starts with the speaker telling some first-hand experience that shaped the information that follows in their talk.
- At every level from minor hockey associations to member associations, we must take the time to highlight successful practices.

Initiation Program Videos

Any or all 3 of the following videos can be added throughout the presentation.



A Message from Tom Renney, President and CEO

At the conclusion of this clinic the coach should be able to:

- Tom Renney speaks to the history of the Initiation Program and how critical the first exposure to hockey is for young players. The goal is to ensure a positive, safe and fun and prepare young girls and boys for a life long passion for the sport of hockey. Skill acquisition is at the forefront of the Initiation Program.



A Message from Paul Carson, Vice President Membership Development

At the conclusion of this clinic the coach should be able to:

- Paul Carson speaks on the experiences young girls and boys will have in the Initiation Program. There is an added emphasis on the opportunity for young players to develop like skills such as cooperation, sportsmanship, and fair play. The engagement in physical activities leads to physical fitness and good mental health.



A Message from Corey McNabb, Director Player & Coach Development

At the conclusion of this clinic the coach should be able to:

- Corey McNabb speaks about how the Initiation Program curriculum offers a progressive "learn to play" experience for all players and highlighting the fact that young players learn best through skills, drills and modified games. The Initiation Program lesson plans are structured in a progressive manner with a sound focus on developing skating, passing, puck control, shooting skills and much more.



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Question Period

A brief period of time set aside for dialogue with the audience

- If necessary, encourage members of the audience to follow up by email if there are questions that are more one to one in nature and may not be of interest to the large group.
- Always a difficult task to figure out how to handle questions that may not pertain to the entire group.



Closing Slide

Closing Slide to be customized for Branch Facilitator use:

- Similar to the title slide, this slide should contain information about the presenter. The Branch logo should be inserted to the right of the divider line separating the presenter's name from the logo.
- Add contact information if members of the audience wish to follow up by email requesting additional information.