

# The Key to Better Hockey

AN OPTIMAL LEARNING AND COACHING MODEL  
TO UNLOCK AND DEVELOP THE INNATIVE POTENTIAL  
OF YOUNG HOCKEY PLAYERS

By  
**HORST  
WEIN**



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Acknowledgements have to go to many players, coaches and sport scientifics of all levels and different sports who have inspired me to extend and deepen my hockey knowledge ,thus providing me with the raw material for this CD-ROM.

Throughout this CD-ROM the words "he","him" and "his" have been used for ease of expression but are intended to apply to both male and female players.



Credit has to go especially to the **Federazione Italiana Hockey** which so generously has offered the line-drawings and photographs of their excellent professional **Marco Massetti** for this CD-ROM without any charge.

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**NOTE:**

For the program of COACHING PLAYERS 16 YEARS AND UP (Level 5), please consult the 2nd volume in Spanish language ("Hockey"), published by the National Olympic Committee of Spain in 1992

## FOREWORD

Many years ago there was a superb book called ***The Science of Hockey*** by Horst Wein, which between the 80' and 90's became the most sold hockey text book ever. Sadly it is out of print now. Although over 20 years old the material in there was refreshingly different and as relevant today as it was then.

When my son started to play hockey we looked around for a club that offered good youth coaching. We were pointed to the best in our area and while the coach was good at motivating the kids, the same old line up and wait your turn routines were used and the kids quickly became bored and did not pay attention to what was being said by the coach, which on the whole was very good advice. There had to be a way of doing exercises that kept the kids interest up for the entire session and I thought that I could use some of the very considerable contacts I had through my website.

By good fortune I met FIH Master Coach Horst Wein and mentioned the project to him. I was told by the author of 31 text books - who is now stimulating football coaches of world-known football clubs as Inter Milan, Club Atlético Peñarol Montevideo, UNAM "Pumas" de México, Real Sociedad de San Sebastian, Club Nacional Montevideo, Cruz Azul, Club America (México) and Universidad Católica de Chile - that in the early 80's he had introduced in Spain a Hockey Development Model which helped to produce hundreds of fine talents who, to the surprise of the rest of the hockey world, a decade later won Olympic gold and silver. What you have before you is his successful coaching program or model which hopefully will become also for you - ***The Key to Better Hockey***.

I don't know very much about coaching, but I have used these exercises with the kids of our club when the coach was not available. Their reaction has been very positive and saying they have learnt more in one evening than a whole month and thoroughly enjoyed the practice. My son has taken some of the exercises and practised the skills involved on his own and his hockey has improved in leaps and bounds. I have passed on some exercises to clubs that were struggling to win games and the turn around has been truly remarkable. One particular club only just failed to gain promotion to the next league, but that was only due to their early season failure before using some of the exercises contained in here.

I have absolutely no doubt that after his first contribution to the development of modern hockey through "***The Science of Hockey***" and "***The Advanced Science of Hockey***", the contents of this CD will again revolutionise club and school hockey throughout the world. As proved in Spain, teams using Horst's methods will become so much more successful than their opposition that they will wonder what the secret is. Although his exercises and simplified games are primarily designed for children, adults can use them to master particular skills too, since there is a logical build up from the very beginning of learning a skill through to it's successful use in a game.

I know you will learn how to play better hockey through using this CD and I hope it will increase your enjoyment of the sport that I have loved for many years.



**George Brink**

Webmaster  
of The Home of Hockey

## PREFACE

All too often, children are introduced to complex sports activities for which they are not yet physically and mentally ready. Expecting a child to comprehend and respond to the complex situations in the full 11-on-11 hockey game format will only beget frustration and feelings of failure. *The Key to Better Hockey* introduces coaches to a training program that takes into account each young player's current physical and mental development. The program promotes the gradual development of correct technical, tactical, and physical capacities of hockey players ages 7 to 14.

This CD features *The Key to Better Hockey*, an innovative system of coaching which is tailored to each age group's cognitive capacities and physical abilities. Most books for youth coaching present general instruction and drills to be applied to all children who participate, regardless of their age. In this CD, however, instruction is substituted by stimulation which is fitted to the specific characteristics of children. Instead of obliging the children to adapt to the game of hockey, the game has been adapted by the author to their mental and physical development stage, thus resulting in better and more enjoyable learning of the complicated game..

This model is essentially a recipe for coaching hockey. It gives you the necessary ingredients of the game—and the proportions in which these ingredients have to be mixed to achieve enjoyable and effective training sessions. Most importantly, it explains what skills are best taught during each stage of the evolution of young hockey players. All of the research has been done; you can simply apply it to your coaching program.



*The Key to Better Hockey* is divided into ten chapters. **Chapter 1** explains the developmental characteristics of children and describes how most current coaching practices actually work against players' developing minds and bodies. According to these practices, children are coached the same ways as adults, even though the adult game is much too complex for a child's mental and motor abilities. The solution to this problem is provided in **Chapter 2**, which explains the different levels of the developmental model, including how

and why it was created. Making use of the Hockey Development Model in schools and clubs will reduce the acquisition of incorrect habits that limit the performance of players at the senior level. These incorrect habits result directly from the way players have been taught and have competed at lower levels.

**Chapter 3** contains basic games and exercises that make up the first level of the Hockey Development Model. You'll learn games and exercises to teach your young players the fundamentals, such as dribbling; passing, receiving, and shooting; and tackling. Level 1 also contains simplified competitions—the hockey decathlon and 2-on-2 Triathlon—for players ages 7 and up.

**Chapter 4** introduces you to the second level in the Hockey Development Model. Using a number of simplified game situations, players learn to respond to the cognitive and physical demands of the game. The simplified game preserves the contextual nature of the full game without placing too great a technical demand on players in these early stages. **Learning to understand the complex game of hockey can be best achieved through the practice of a logical progression of simplified games , with a gradual increase in the numbers of players on the team .** Level 2 also contains competitions tailored to this age group—Mini-Hockey 3-on-3, the Mini-Hockey Pentathlon, and the 3-on-3 Triathlon.

**Chapters 5 and 6** progress to Level 3, which pertains to players ages 10 years and up. You'll learn additional simplified games and competitions that gradually increase in complexity from the games in Level 2. Level 3 contains in chapter 6 a program for developing young goalkeepers .It describes the most important qualities necessary to be a goalkeeper, and it offers exercises to enhance and develop these skills.

In **Chapter 7** a coaching program is introduced to give the young children their first experiences in the penalty corner attack and defense through the repetitive practice of 10 different simplified games whilst the **Chapter 8** presents a coaching program for the sweep hit (with detailed information about its unique technique) .

**Chapter 9** gives you the tools for training players of 12 years and up. This chapter presents a detailed description of Level 4 in the Hockey Development Model. It includes more simplified games that closely link to the appropriate level of competition, 8-on-8 Hockey—considered an ideal bridge for leading young athletes to the full hockey game. Game-oriented practice, as you find here, stimulates participants more than traditional instruction and training sessions, in which the contents are isolated from the competition.

The games and drills in chapters 3 through 9 are also complemented by a superior collection of more than 200 full-color illustrations, exercises and games that will help you to put the concepts in motion.

**Chapter 10** emphasizes that the only way to develop healthy, happy, and talented hockey players is to follow the natural development of young hockey players. To rush this development is to hinder their healthy formation and future performance.

It is time for all coaches, whether novices or experienced, to revise their ways of coaching and tailor their training sessions and competitions to the children they are entrusted with. **The Key to Better Hockey** is the tool you need to develop a successful hockey program with satisfied young players.