



Elmbrook Youth Hockey Association

Player Development Framework

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The EYHA Way

The *EYHA Way* is built on fundamentals, development, pride in our organization, and preparing players for the next level of hockey.

At EYHA:

- **We teach the game the right way.**

We build strong fundamentals: skating, puck skills, passing, shooting, and understanding the game.

- **We develop players for the long term.**

Success is measured by how players grow year after year and how prepared they are for the next level of hockey.

- **We help players understand the full game.**

Players learn how hockey works in a structured way over time: breakouts, defensive responsibility, forechecking, special teams, and team play.

- **We take pride in our organization.**

Players represent EYHA with respect and take care of the locker rooms, facilities, and teammates around them.

- **We build strong young people.**

Hockey teaches responsibility, teamwork, effort, and respect.



Player Development Approach

EYHA follows the USA Hockey American Development Model (ADM), which provides the national framework for age-appropriate player development.

Within that framework, EYHA emphasizes several key priorities to guide how players and teams develop throughout the program. The goal is consistency over time to ensure players build their skills, understanding of the game, and confidence as they move through each level.



Five Pillars of EYHA Development

These pillars represent the areas of focus that guide development across the organization.

1. Skating & Skills

Strong skating and puck skills are the foundation of hockey. EYHA prioritizes skating, puck control, passing, and shooting at every age level.

2. Hockey IQ

Players learn how the game works. As they progress, they are introduced to core hockey concepts and standard systems—such as breakouts, defensive zone coverages, forechecking styles, and special teams—so they understand the basic structure of the game and carry that knowledge throughout their hockey careers.

3. Compete

Hockey is played with effort, resilience, and determination. Players learn to battle for pucks, play through adversity, support teammates with their work ethic, and compete every shift regardless of the score.

4. Coachability

Players develop a growth mindset by embracing instruction, responding to feedback, and continually striving to improve. Coachability encourages accountability, resilience, and a willingness to learn throughout a player's hockey journey.

5. Pride in the Jersey

Players represent EYHA with respect and accountability. This includes sportsmanship, respect for teammates and opponents, and taking pride in the rink and locker room as our home.



Player Development Pathway

Players should experience a clear progression as they move through EYHA.

Learn to Skate / Learn to Play

Focus on balance, skating fundamentals, and developing confidence on the ice.

6U–8U

Emphasis on skating development, puck control, teamwork, and enjoyment of the game.

10U

Continued skill development while introducing positional awareness and basic game concepts.

12U

Expanded team play concepts and increased hockey IQ.

14U

Preparation for high school hockey with greater pace, situational play, and team structure.

Advanced Opportunities

Helping advance players to high level programs like the Milwaukee Jr. Admirals when appropriate should be seen as a success for both the player and EYHA. Creating a system for when, how, and why this is appropriate for kids should be developed.

Same to be said with the Brookfield Stars. We should be developing kids to seamlessly fit into those teams since we are the main feeder to that program. This takes collaboration approaches.



Coaching Structure & Communication

A strong program depends on clear communication and support for coaches.

Key priorities include:

- **Season Development Plans** – Each age group operates with a 3-stage full-season master plan outlining the key skills, concepts, and priorities for that level.
- **Regular Communication** – Consistent communication between the Hockey Director and team coaches to reinforce development priorities and address challenges.
- **Shared Practice Frameworks** – Guidance on practice structure and development themes while allowing coaches flexibility in how they run their practices.
- **Coach Collaboration** – Encouraging communication across teams so the organization operates as one program rather than independent teams.

The goal is not to micromanage practices, but to provide a clear framework that ensures players develop consistently as they move through the program.

Organizational Culture

Culture plays an important role in the success of this.

EYHA should emphasize:

- respect for teammates, coaches, referees, and opponents
- accountability for behavior on and off the ice
- pride in representing the organization
- responsibility for the rink and locker room environment
- understanding that **effort and hard work on the ice matter more than natural talent**

Players should understand that wearing an EYHA jersey represents more than just their team.



Vision for the Future of EYHA

The goal of this approach is to create a clear and sustainable development structure for the organization no matter who is in the Hockey Director role years from now.

By establishing the EYHA Way and reinforcing a consistent development model, the program can provide players with a strong foundation that supports their growth both as hockey players and as young people.

Players who move through EYHA should leave the program as:

- strong skaters with solid puck skills
- confident competitors who understand the game
- responsible teammates who represent their organization with pride
- players prepared for the next level of hockey

This structure helps ensure that EYHA continues to develop players, teams, and leaders for many years to come.