

Vision on Game & Game Development

The HFL's vision is that the hockey game must be taught and improved in a game and match-orientated manner. Our vision on Game & Game Development thus consists of the parts

- a) Game-orientated training - Paul de Ruijter (translation Eric Fintelman)
- b) Motor learning - Niels Papen (translation Eric Fintelman)
- c) Motivation & Feedback - Marjolein Roemaat. (translation Eric Fintelman)

Paul de Ruijter

Game-orientated training

There are several considerations underlying the more game and competitive training. Training with more fun and motivation is an important motive. During play, children become more playful and the skills will be a means to play the game. Playing the game will go automatically and when making game related choices they also come to their own technical solutions.

Moreover, recent developments of motor learning show that players become more competitive in a game and match situation. Players are always confronted with choices to resolve the situation themselves. Many learning processes take place more unconsciously. The skills and movements will remain in the subconscious part of the brain by learning in a playful way. In this way it also prevents thinking of those movements in stress situations during the actual match.

We are used to disconnect technical skills from the game within the actual training session. That way we are trying to improve those skills. Within the traditional way of thinking we are talking about creating the first part of the session being the part where we like to train those skills. We do forget that the game is hockey. When you ask children what they think was the best part of the training, they all say 'the small game at the end'. It is therefore very well possible and also fun to learn how to play hockey in a playful way, where the technical skills are discussed during the game.

Main functions of the game

A hockey match can be divided into three elements. These functions are to be found in every game: ball possession (BP), non-ball possession (NP) and turn over (TO), of winning the ball (WB) and losing the ball (LB). In this case there will always be a target (T) and a direction (D).

With target (T) we mean that the ultimate goal of the game is to score a goal at the opponent's end, or to prevent the opponent from scoring a goal at your own end. By direction (D) we mean that the direction of playing the ball always needs to be forward as quickly as possible. And, preferably, as far as possible in the direction of the opponent's goal (forward), in order to finally score a goal.

Playful training or game-orientated training means taking all elements into account that happen in a real match.

Children play naturally, it is in their system.

In addition, recent developments from motor learning show that players become more competitive in a game and game-orientated situation. The players are always faced with choices to resolve the situation themselves. Many learning processes take place more unconsciously. The movements will stay longer within the unconscious part of the brain and that also prevents thinking about those movements in stress situations during the actual match.

Measuring rod

When preparing a training session, you also place the measuring rod alongside the above elements. Carefully check whether game and / or match-oriented training components are part of the training session. Do you have BP, NP and TO in your preparation of an exercise? Is there always Target and Direction? If so, then this exercise meets the vision of Game & Game development.

With a training form that connects to the Vision Game & Game Development you can always offer a block of technical skills training, but this does not necessarily have to be at the beginning. It is preferable to start with game-orientated training parts and if it turns out that technical elements (outside of the game) have to be improved in the eyes of the trainer there must be room for it. However, do practice as much as possible from within the context of the game. In addition, the observation from motor learning that technical skills do not always have to be learned and improved through the conscious mind. The use of unconscious learning methods leads to more durable and sustainable learning results, in which a player under pressure will not have to think about his actions. He or she just does whatever comes to (the unconscious) mind.

What do we mean by game-orientated training?

How do you look at the hockey game?

Traditionally or modern (game-orientated).

How do I prepare a game-orientated training?

Traditional

The traditional way of preparing a training consists of a Warm-up, Key Subject 1, Key Subject 2 and finally a small Game.

Modern (game-orientated)

Game-orientated training parts are offered from the game-orientated approach, in which all elements BP - NP - TO, Target and Direction will be part of the training session.

How do trainings look like? Traditionally

What you would see normally are the more technical skill-orientated training sessions, in which the technical skills are taught and improved in core 1 of the training. In addition, we are often inclined to apply the conscious learning method. Meaning we are explaining how to handle a certain skill, instead of letting the players experience it themselves.

From the obligations of the team

Anno 2019 we look at the hockey game from the team functions BP, NP and TO (WB & LB). Target and direction are also inextricably linked and important elements. You could then argue undisputedly that you only need to play relevant game situations, so that players (of every level and age) can play a better game. The focus on technical skills is mainly considered for a player to become more competitive and will develop game intelligence. Technical skills are then just meaning to reach the goal.

How do trainings look like? Modern

After a responsible warm-up we see more game and match-orientated training forms in which the game and technical skills are taught and improved from an unconscious learning method. In addition, there is more thought from the game to the training: Train the Game!

We can partially skip the conscious learning of technical skills ... and still achieve results!

Assessment: when does a team and / or player play well / better / well?

What do you see as a trainer / coach during the competition? Do you look at his technical skills or do you see how a player solves a game problem somewhere on the field? Or how does a player or a line act in NBB? When you judge a team or player of team functions, you reach different conclusions than when you only look at technical skills. Which assessment method do you use and how far do you go in it? Use a format with the elements: technical skills, tactics, mentality and physics. Or try out a format of the team functions BP-NP-TO (+T & D)? The choice is of course made up out of your own vision on hockey!

Technical skills training with regard to the age groups

It is quite possible to apply a gradation in the relationship between learning and improving technical skill-orientated training versus game-orientated training. It is not a case of one approach excluding the other; in that respect, both ways can go hand in hand and certainly reinforce each other.

It is not about the separate technical skills themselves, but about technical skills in relation to the context or the game environment.

Game-orientated versus technical skill-orientated approach

Action-orientated / Action-theoretical approach

The HFL is more keen on a 'game-orientated approach', in which players learn to play hockey better by just playing the game itself. A 'technical skill-orientated approach' is more about the isolated learning and improvement of technical skills that are then being separated from the actual game. In the HFL's view, technical skills should be offered as quickly and as much as possible in relation to the hockey

game. Technical skills should have a relationship with actions in game situations. That way players will be more thinking out of the "solving game problems" perspective instead of using technical skills they have been taught, but not in a way they should during the game. Train the game!

This way, players learn skills that prove to be more effective in match situations and also learn to choose the most effective way to solve a problem.

The starting point is therefore to learn and improve actions instead of physical movements. This view is in line with the 'action-orientated / action-theoretical approach', in which players want to achieve and want to influence something with their actions. In that way there will always be "game intentions".

Players have to be challenged to become better at hockey in ever-changing game situations.

Technical skills as a means

As long as the technical execution is not a goal, but a means of becoming a game-competent player in the game, both approaches certainly do not exclude each other. Players must be challenged to become better in the game of hockey in ever-changing game situations (to learn how to make better choices). If it appears that in game and competition forms imperfections in technical execution are signaled, then you can always go back to a technical part in a training. An important remark is that you can learn and improve technical skills both consciously and unconsciously (see article 2 on 'Motor learning' by Niels Papen).

We as trainers are used to more traditional training. In this way of training, the learning process is mainly from a conscious perspective. The latest research and modern development however shows that if we approach training more in an unconscious matter, players will become better. Especially when combined with offering technical skills in a situation where there is a lot of movement and anticipation on sudden changes in a game.

By using various tools, better and lasting learning results can often be achieved through unconscious learning methods. The one certainly does not exclude the other, only the starting point is different.

Fun, Motivation & Feedback

By offering many game-oriented exercises, the chances will be bigger that players have more fun, which is obviously very important. By responding to the intrinsic motivation of the players and by giving positive feedback, the HFL Center of Expertise assumes that both players and teams can learn and develop in a safe way (see article 3 on Motivation and Feedback by Marjolein Roemaat)

Dilemmas for the trainer

- 1) Variety in training and exercises remains important.
- 2) The advantage of a lot of game-orientated training is that the intensity is high. If you train three times a week, the intensity can be too high and then more technical skills-orientated training exercises can offer a solution to control the intensity.
- 3) Experiencing success can also be a reason. Flawless learning will be difficult to offer in a game-orientated way.

Schedule Target Hockey (STH)

In the Schedule Target Hockey (STH) (see picture underneath) a number of phases is distinguished. The elements BB - NBB - OS and Target and Direction are also included. The STH is a handy tool to gain insight into the complex game of hockey and to make it simple and manageable. Four phases are distinguished, namely:

Phase 1: Defense versus Attack.

Phase 2: Structure on own half versus Interference.

Phase 3: Build up on opponents' half of the pitch versus Slowing down.

Phase 4: Creating opportunities versus preventing Opportunities.

A number of dominant actions are described in each of these phases. These are actions that are of importance to the player that has the ball, to the one that don't have the ball. There, obviously will always be a lot of TURN OVERS in between those two. One of the teams tries to score a goal and the other team will by definition aim to prevent getting a goal against. During this game there are constantly TURN OVERS and there will always be Target and Direction.

*A TURN OVER means the moment you are losing or gaining the ball. You want to be swift in turning over the ball to make sure you will gain from the fact that you either win or lose the ball. In losing the ball you would like to have as many players possible behind the ball and win it back again as quickly as possible. In doing so, you will have the best chance of creating a chance or even scoring a goal. In winning the ball you want to play the ball as high (in which "high" means up front) as possible on the pitch to make sure you will keep possession as near to the opponents goal as possible.

Schedule Target Hockey



TO: BP/NP (Turn-over to Ball Possession or to Non-Ball Possession)

All (dominant) actions are taking place on the whole pitch. If you divide the field in left, middle and right and you keep the four zones, you can create 12 areas. BP - NP - T0 and Target and Direction can be found in all these areas or on overlapping areas.

Use of the STH

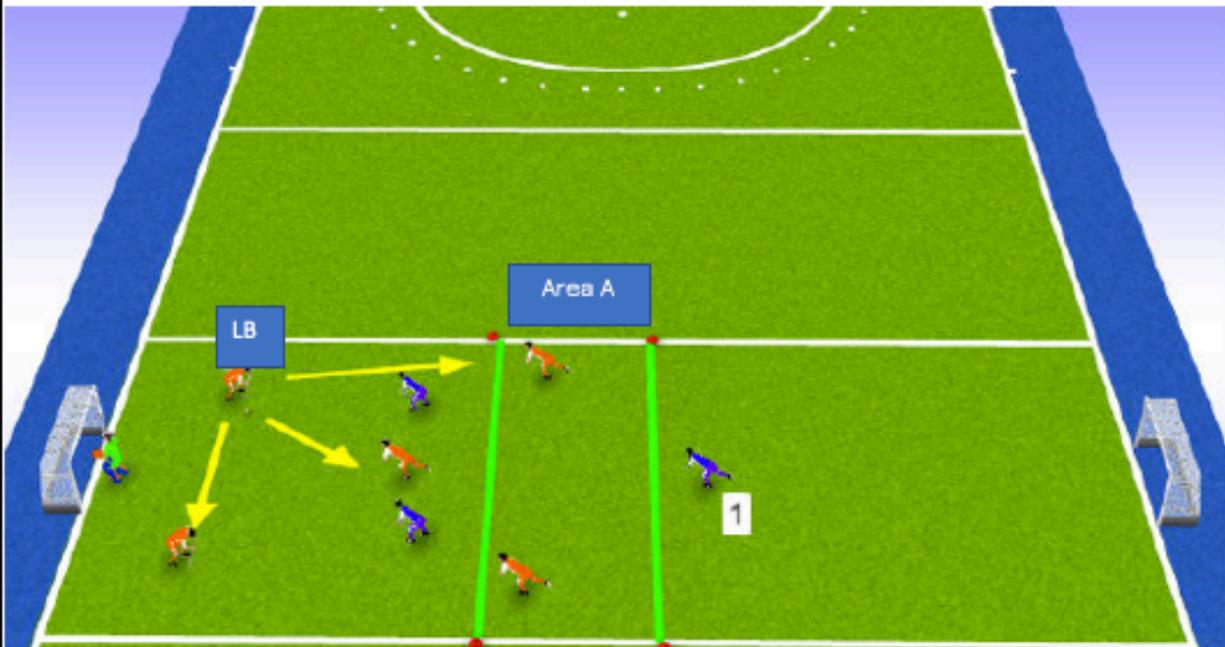
The STH can be used in the development of game and match-orientated training and is a great tool for determination of the context. In each of the 12 areas, or combinations thereof, these trainings and/or exercises can be offered and developed. In that manor you can offer exercises which really copy match-related skills. A trainer / coach who is able to make observations and analyzes from the real (practice) match will also be able to train or improve certain points that actually matter to the match itself. That way the trainer/ coach can use the STH as guideline to be able to do exercises that will lead to targeted game situations. The trainer / coach must also be able to make sort of a screenshot of the match played, to translate it into a concrete game-orientated training. Technical skills can also be practiced in the context of the match this way. Functional technical skills training sessions: an exercise on receiving a ball coming from left back will be completely different then an exercise concerning carrying a ball attacking from the right-hand side; an exercise concerning a pass from mid-mid is different than an exercise concerning a pass from right-back, et cetera.

The requirements for game solutions are different for top players than for the U10's or for an U12 team. It also matters if these kids are girls or boys, for the development of girls will go generally much faster than with boys.

Methodical ongoing curriculum

In principle, the game challenges within all 12 areas (or combinations of areas) are the same for both novice and advanced players. However, the requirements for game solutions are different for top players than they are for, for example, U10 players and an U12 team. This may lie in the choices of technical skills, the pace in which the solutions are being found, the direction of play, the pressure that can / should be delivered, et cetera. The challenge for developing a continuous learning line is therefore not to create a multitude of exercises, but to create a more limited number of exercises. These exercises are offered over the years (normally educating a youth player will take 10 years), in which the complexity and speed of making choices are expanded, also in relation to the development of technical skills. Herewith players get more and more opportunities to come up with adequate solutions in real game and match situations.

Examples of a continuous curriculum can be found on the next two pages.

Category	U9	Time	10 mins	Points of direction
Phase	Outletting versus Interfering			Ball possession
Game targets	Outletting without any risk Close of pass lines, interception			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pass to available player with right speed * Try to be available without the ball * Use a push pass or sweep
Game form	3 against 2 + goal keepers			Non-ball possession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Stay behind the ball * Defend with two or three within stick length of each other * Try to provoke the opponent making errors
 <p>1/8 of a pitch</p>				Turn over <p>When losing the ball:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pressure on the ball and try to win it back as soon as possible <p>When gaining the ball:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Quick action and play towards the player who is available
Set-up <p>Orange should try to build the game up from 3 against 2. Always starting at the left back (LB)</p> <p>If they succeed in playing the ball to one of two players in Area A, they will receive a point. Blue is allowed to conquer the ball and try to score on the goal. When blue has got the ball, player 1 is allowed to play too, making it a 3 against 3</p>				Variation (making it easier or more difficult) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * In stead of 1 player, you can also have 2 behind area A. * You can blow the wistle after 10 secs, to turn over the game

Category	U14	Time	10 mins	Points of direction
Phase	Outletting versus Interfering			Ball possession
Game targets	Building up with 3 and 1 midfielder, outletting; effectiveness to score Interference of first defensive phase.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Stretch the pitch (wide and deep) * Try to use open receiving as much as possible * Make sure you keep distance
Game form	4 against 3 + 1 and 3 against 1 + 1			Non-ball possession
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Close of diagonal line with last defender * Choose between zonal or man-to-man defense * Force opponent to the right
				Turn over
				<p>When losing the ball:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Create small areas * Pressure on the ball <p>When gaining the ball:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pass strait after winning the ball * Being blue try to pass to the right immediately
1/2 a pitch				Variation (making it easier or more difficult)
Set-up				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Create smaller space for outletting * Let orange play with one player less * Put one orange and one blue player on the right hand side of the pitch
<p>Orange plays 4 against 3 and tries to score in the goal with the blue goalie in.</p> <p>When blue turns the ball over, they are allowed to score in the goal with the orange goalie in.</p>				

Finally

By means of this three-part article series, the HFL will take you into the Game & Game Development vision. Within the three sub-aspects of the vision on G & GD, the HFL will continue to develop, deepen and expand further. The translation of this vision makes the training both fun and more competitive for both the player and the trainer.