

Development Mindset

Fun mini-challenges!



Here are mini-challenges to help teach and promote inclusion during practice.

Further Explanations...

- Incorporate the mini-challenges into your tactical and technical practices.
- Adapt the mini-challenges according to your group's age and skill level.
- Give a demonstration when explaining the mini-challenge so participants know what they need to do.
- The indication [U9 and +] means that, in general, the mini-challenge is better suited for these levels, but adjustments can be made for U7.



An Interesting Strategy!

- To encourage a development mindset, **start by doing one of the mini-challenges** below during a practice so your players can experience it firsthand.
- **At the end of practice**, take 10 minutes to talk about a development mindset using the [infographic on the I'm on Board program page](#):
 - What is it?
 - Why is it important in sports?
 - What are examples of a development mindset?

Why Is It Useful?

Your players will better understand and pay attention to what you say if they can connect it to a recent experience.



Constructive Mistake [U9 and +]*

Objective: Encourage players to learn from their mistakes and see them as opportunities for improvement.

How Does It Work?

During a practice with multiple drills or activities, players must complete a specific task (e.g., shooting at the net or stickhandling). Each time a player fails (e.g., misses a shot, loses control of the puck), they must find one thing to improve next time and discuss it with the coach or a teammate.

Why Is It Useful?

It encourages players to see failure as a normal part of the learning process, not as a defeat. It also encourages them to focus on continuous improvement.

*Younger players may have a hard time pinpointing areas they need to work on to improve their technical skills.

Perseverance Relay

Objective: Encourage players to develop resilience and the ability to overcome challenges.

How Does It Work?

Organize a relay race where each player must complete a series of technical challenges (e.g., weaving through cones, making an accurate shot, completing passes). Each player must repeat the drill until they complete it correctly. The team will advance to the next round only after each player has successfully completed their task.

Why Is It Useful?

It shows players that perseverance can lead to success, even after several failed attempts, reinforcing the idea that practice and hard work lead to progress.



Developing Skills [U9 and +]

Objective: Encourage players to always progress and take on new challenges.

How Does It Work?

Each player chooses a technical skill they want to improve (e.g., precise passing, powerful shots, puck handling). The coach creates specific drills for each skill and at the end of each activity, they ask players to notice any progress they made, no matter how small.

Why Is It Useful?

It emphasizes that progress takes time and hard work, not luck or innate talent. It also promotes a development mindset by encouraging self-reflection and valuing continuous improvement.

Positive Mindset

Objective: Encourage players to maintain a positive attitude, even in the face of adversity.

How Does It Work?

During a drill, each time a player makes a mistake or encounters a difficulty (e.g., loses the puck, misses a shot), the coach asks them to say a positive affirmation out loud, such as “I’ll get better,” “I’ve already made progress,” or “I’m going to keep working hard.”

Why Is It Useful?

It helps players focus on growing rather than getting discouraged by mistakes, which, in turn, fosters an environment that values perseverance and positivity.

Progressive Challenge

Objective: Develop players’ ability to handle increasingly complex challenges.

How Does It Work?

Organize drills where players start with a simple task (e.g., passing without defence players), then with each successful attempt, the difficulty gradually increases (e.g., adding defence players, increasing speed). For example, a player can work on controlling the puck on their own, then move on to controlling the puck under pressure.

Why Is It Useful?

It shows players that skills can improve with consistent effort, which, in turn, supports a development mindset. They understand that the more they practise, the more they can overcome difficult challenges.

Personal Progress [U9 and +]

Objective: Encourage players to set personal goals and track their own progress.

How Does It Work?

Each player must choose one area they want to improve (e.g., speed, shot accuracy, skating technique, fakes) and set a small, achievable goal for each practice. For example, if a player wants to improve their shot, they can set a goal like making five consecutive shots on target during a drill.

Why Is It Useful?

It encourages players to see their development as an ongoing process and celebrate even the smallest wins. It also focuses on the importance of setting realistic goals and the satisfaction of progress.

Constructive Feedback [U9 and +]

Objective: Encourage players' personal growth through constructive peer feedback.

How Does It Work?

Divide players into teams of two for an entire practice. After a drill or an activity, players must share positive, constructive feedback on each other's performance. Each player will give their teammate feedback on what they did well and one suggestion for improvement.

- These mini-challenges should encourage each pair to observe one another by either working together on a drill or taking turns performing it.

Why Is It Useful?

It helps young players recognize the importance of feedback in the learning process. They learn to give and receive constructive feedback, fostering both individual and team growth.