

Mutual Support

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 teach mutual support, **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 mutual support using the [infographic on the I'm on Board program page](#):
 - What is it?
 - Why is it important in sports?
 - What are examples of mutual support?

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.



Mixed Play

Objective: Encourage mutual support, regardless of players' experience or skills.

How Does It Work?

Divide players into teams, mixing more experienced players with less experienced ones. Each team must work together to complete a challenge during a scrimmage (e.g., everyone must touch the puck [U7] or make a backhand pass [U11]) or during a team drill (e.g., puck recovery or a continuous four-pass drill). At the end of the game or activity, the players and coaches will choose the team that showed the best teamwork and mutual support.

Why Is It Useful?

It teaches players to work together and not focus only on the stronger or faster players, which, in turn, builds a supportive and inclusive environment.

Team Perseverance [U9 and +]

Objective: Encourage mutual support and perseverance as a team.

How Does It Work?

During a scrimmage, each team faces a group challenge that requires active participation and perseverance from every player. For example, each team must complete five consecutive, clean passes or a set of three difficult passes (determined in advance) before shooting on the net. If a player misses a pass, the team must start over before trying to score a goal.

Why Is It Useful?

It shows that personal growth drives team progress and that perseverance is crucial for both team and individual success.

Working Together [U9 and +]

Objective: Strengthen relationships between players by encouraging everyone to participate, even in tough situations.

How Does It Work?

Organize a scrimmage where players have to help one another complete a specific challenge. All players must support and encourage one another to succeed. The team that completes all the challenges wins.

- Examples of specific challenges (to be adapted according to the players' ability and skill level):
 - **Score a goal** (or successfully get the puck across the other team's goal line).
 - **Successfully pass** the puck to a teammate for a goal.
 - **Execute a nice feint** or **defensive play**.
 - **Retrieve the puck** from a corner and pass it to a teammate.
 - **Shoot the puck accurately** in a specific spot, such as a small target in the net.

Why Is It Useful?

It focuses on the importance of mutual support, emphasizing that every player contributes to the team's success, not only the most talented or skilled players.



Passing to Others [U9 and +]

Objective: Encourage mutual support, patience and inclusion among players of varying strengths, while also building stronger communication and team spirit.

How Does It Work?

During a technical drill, divide players into teams of two, ensuring each team has a mix of different strengths. One player gives constructive feedback and advice to help their teammate improve their technique (e.g., how to position themselves on the ice, hold their stick, adjust their skate angle), while providing positive reinforcement. After a few minutes, the players will switch.

- A less skilled player may need to guide a more experienced or skilled teammate. When players are encouraged to share **their observations** (i.e., describe their teammate's actions), they can work together to help the more experienced player improve their skills.

Why Is It Useful?

It emphasizes the value of mutual support, showing that every player can contribute to their teammates' learning and growth, which, in turn, fosters stronger communication and team spirit.

