



HEADS UP

Teacher's Guide by Maureen Baron, M.A.

Target Audience: Senior high
Post Secondary
Parents
Coaches

Curriculum Areas: Health and wellness
Family Studies
Physical Education
Sports Medicine
Coaching
Parenting
Kinesiology
Sociology
Psychology

Subject topics: Physical Fitness
Leadership
Families
Career planning
Hockey
Sports

Activity #1: How many children play organized sports and why?

Think of your own childhood experience playing organized sports. Do a survey using the chart below. Then have the group collate the information and draw conclusions, including access and availability of facilities and equipment and skill levels demanded by the sports teams, leagues, federations or associations.

Sport	Age range when played	Where played	What skill level	What time of year played

If the students played for more than one season or a year, have them think about why they continued to play. List these reasons and categorize them into intrinsic or extrinsic. If extrinsic, who, or what, played a key role in the decision to play the sport? Did their reasons for playing evolve as they grew older?

The answers to these questions can be written in a journal over several weeks to give everyone time to reflect and also talk to family and friends, look at some sports memorabilia from childhood, etc. Each writer should discuss the role of organized sports in their childhood and the effects it may have had on their later attitudes towards the sport, health and wellness or life skills.

Activity #2: Sports Injuries

"Amateur athletes play their sport to stay in shape while professional athletes get in shape to play their sport." Unknown quotation

Each week the children in **Heads Up** not only play hockey and attend formal practice, they also train on their own to increase endurance and strength and to improve specific skills. Given how much time they spend on these physical activities, given that their bodies are still growing, given the fearlessness with which they play hockey... injuries are almost inevitable: a broken thumb, a broken arm, a possible concussion, a shoulder injury, a bruised ego, a bruised shin, or an inflated or deflated self-esteem. Injuries deliberately inflicted by one player on another result in game suspensions or expulsion, but it is the injuries that result from normal play that worry everyone the most.

Hockey officials agree that body checking is dangerous and can result in serious injuries. In Canada, there has been much public debate around *when* players should be allowed to body check each other.

A study was published in the journal *Pediatrics*, Vol. 117, No. 2, February 2006, pp. e143-e147, called "**Body-Checking Rules and Childhood Injuries in Ice Hockey**" by Alison Macpherson, PhD, Linda Rothman, BScOT, MHSc and Andrew Howard, MD, MSc, FRCSC.

According to their findings: *"The Canadian Hockey Association has allowed body checking from ages 12 to 13 (peewee level) and up.... Ontario introduced body checking at ages 10 to 11 (atom level) in the competitive leagues, whereas in Quebec body checking has only been allowed at ages 14 to 15 (bantam level). The purpose of this study was to compare body-checking injuries, fractures, and concussions in boys' minor hockey between jurisdictions in which checking is allowed and jurisdictions in which body checking is not allowed."* The analyzed data was collected between September 1995 and the end of August 2002.

"RESULTS. *Of the 4736 hockey injuries, 3006 (63%) were in Ontario and 1730 (37%) were in Quebec. Most of the injuries occurred in areas in which checking was allowed (2824 [59.6%]). At ages 10 to 13, players had significantly greater odds of suffering a checking injury where checking was allowed... (odds ratio [OR]: 1.86; 95% confidence interval [CI]: 1.6–2.11). Players in this age group were also more likely to suffer a concussion (OR: 1.42; 95% CI: 0.98–2.05) or fracture (OR: 1.25; 95% CI: 1.06–1.47) where checking was allowed. Among older players, when checking was allowed in both provinces, there were higher odds (OR: 1.90; 95% CI: 1.36–2.66) of receiving a checking injury in the province that had introduced checking at a younger age, suggesting that there is no protective effect from learning to check earlier.*

"CONCLUSIONS. *Increased injuries attributable to checking were observed where checking was allowed. This study supports policies that disallow body checking to reduce ice hockey injuries in children."*

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/117/2/e143>

From the Safety Council of Canada – January 2004, Hockey Canada recommends that body checking begin at age 11. In 2003, four of that Association's 13 branches decided to allow checking for boys as young as 9 years old. For a short article entitled "Body Checking in Minor Hockey," visit: <http://www.safety-council.org/info/sport/hockey-bodycheck.html>

Scenario: You are the parent of a 12-year-old boy playing in a hockey league sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department of your municipality. The mayor is worried about skyrocketing liability insurance for the use of the municipality's hockey rinks and wants to ban body checking until the players are 18. The coaches want to allow body checking beginning at age 13, otherwise they will be severely limited in terms of what teams they can play at the provincial level. They are concerned that this ban would force the stronger players to play in leagues where body checking is allowed and would relegate their league to recreational playing only.

Have the following participants prepare briefs to present to the mayor's committee on body checking. Each presenter will have 2-3 minutes to present their brief orally.

- ❖ Mother of a 12-year-old recreational hockey player
- ❖ Father of a 12-year-old competitive hockey player
- ❖ Coach of a competitive hockey team for 12- to 14-year-old boys
- ❖ Coach of a competitive hockey team for 12- to 14-year-old girls
- ❖ Provincial hockey league competitive team scout
- ❖ 16-year-old male recreational player
- ❖ 17-year-old competitive female hockey player

Activity #3: When does a child's sports game move from a fun recreational activity to a job?

The seven hockey players in *Heads Up* all have lofty goals of playing in the professional leagues or in the Olympics. They are all looking at the move to peewee as a stepping stone to their goal. They are no longer playing strictly for fun, fitness or friends. Peewee is serious hockey with lots of team and individual practices. Injuries are not "boobos" but badges of courage and skill. Nice players don't make it. They have to learn how to deal with the anxieties and stresses of losing or winning the big games. This is not recreational hockey. These peewee hockey players have a job – playing so their team wins. These 11-year-olds aren't old enough to hold down a paying job like a paper route. But they are old enough to hold down the non-paying job of peewee hockey player.

Debate the following: Given the time the players devote to this non-paying job; given the time they have to devote to school; given the amount of sleep a growing 11-year-old needs... how ethical is it for children this young to have a non-paying hockey-playing job?

Activity #4: The child plays hockey but the family must be part of their hockey team.

Eleven-year-olds can't drive to hockey practice, nor can they easily use public transport with all of their gear. Eleven-year-olds can't get to games in far-flung arenas, at strange times on weekend days and week nights. What 11-year-old can pay for new or even second- or third-hand equipment or pay team costs or travel expenses by themselves? The young player needs the financial support of parents. Parents do the driving and provide the necessary morale boosting. They also volunteer as timers, fundraisers, chaperones, coaches or organizers. They advocate or negotiate with coaches, teachers, other team parents and hockey officials.

"... Ms. Widell now enjoys both the game and the camaraderie she encounters at the arena where everyone knows her name. 'People always say this must be such a thankless task and it must kill your social life, but it's great when I walk into the arena and know all the boys and all the parents. Hockey is our social life.'"

Originally appeared in *The Globe and Mail*, Saturday, November 6, 2004

The child may want to play hockey but he or she can only go so far unless the family becomes involved. One mother in **Heads Up** says that playing hockey has become a class thing – you need money to go beyond a certain point. How does a single parent, or any parent, cope with the demands of time and money involved in a child's hockey team? How do a family's schedule, priorities, dynamics, finances and activities change when their child plays for an organized team?

Activity #5: The role of a coach

Coaches are expected to teach, mentor, support, lead, set an example, train and prepare their players physically and psychologically. In turn, coaches have expectations of their players: that they arrive on time and be prepared, play fair, do their best, play responsibly, support each other and strive to improve. Coaches have different styles, techniques and strategies for achieving their goals. Examine the styles of the coaches from **Heads Up** and discuss the positives and negatives. How do their players perceive the coach's style? How do the dynamics change, at home and the rink, when the coach is also your parent?