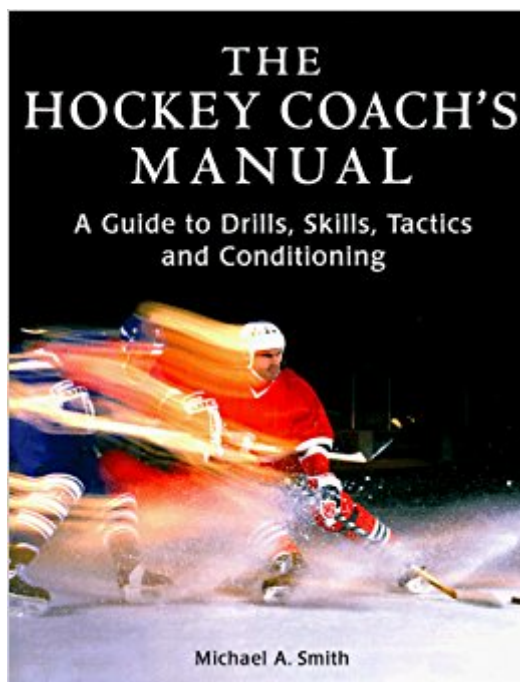


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# The Hockey Coach's Manual: A Guide To Drills, Skills And Conditioning



## Synopsis

"Hockey is a game that demands good sound skills as the foundation for both individual players and the team, " writes Mike Smith. And team success, he adds, is simply a reflection of coaching success. In *The Hockey Coach's Manual: A Guide to Drills, Skills, Tactics and Conditioning*, Smith presents a winning formula for the hockey season. Complete with over 125 step-by-step diagrams, this book helps coaches set up a season-long program and walks them through a host of dryland and on-ice training regimens that will build team cooperation and enhance individual ability. Dozens of skill-building drills provide coaches with the tactical and strategic advantage vital for matching a tailor-made hockey system--whether based on conservative or aggressive play -- to the achievement level of players aged 9 to 18. A timeless and accessible handbook, *The Hockey Coach's Manual* is invaluable both as an introduction and as a quick refresher course to the challenging responsibility of coaching hockey.

## Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Firefly Books (September 1, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 155209183X

ISBN-13: 978-1552091838

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.5 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.0 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,610,724 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #98 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Coaching > Hockey](#) #1054 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Hockey](#) #2409 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Winter Sports](#)

## Customer Reviews

Michael A. Smith has been involved with hockey for over forty years as a player, coach, and staff member with the New York Rangers, Colorado Rockies, Tulsa Oilers, Winnipeg Jets, and Team USA. He has served as an advisor for the National Hockey League and has traveled extensively as a lecturer, advisor, and friend of the sport. He has written several books about hockey.

**General Introduction** North American Hockey has historically been a game learned on natural ice. Pickup games played on a frozen pond or river or on a family backyard rink attracted players of all

ages who honed their skills during endless winter days. The pond system provided something besides basic hockey skills, however. It bred a toughness into players that has characterized the Canadian game. Younger players who were banged around, knocked down, or checked into the snowbank by more experienced players quickly learned not to show hurt or humiliation. Though often at a disadvantage in size, skill or ability, these younger players chose instead to get back into the play, driven by a competitive urge to win against their older rivals. Today, organized hockey has largely taken the place of yesterday's improvised backyard games. Most of what young players once learned on the pond is taught within the more structured program of a community club. Guiding that transition from friendly to formal competition is the coach, who must provide leadership and instruction for the team. To fulfill his role as a teacher, today's coach must apply new, improved methods of training to develop his team's skills and elevate its level of play. Players arrive at their first practice as unrelated individuals of differing athletic abilities and skill levels. It is the coach's job to transform these players into a team. Matching a tactical strategy to suit the team's strengths (or weaknesses) calls for the coach to lay out a season-long training schedule timed to bring his players to their optimal level of conditioning and skill within the playing season. Hockey is not a complex game. Yet it is only through careful planning and organization that the coach can distill the game's principles into a simple and understandable method. This book provides such an introduction to several of the important elements of coaching. It will help the coach build a team by utilizing both dryland and on-ice training, designed to develop athletic abilities and fundamental hockey skills. Individual chapters on defensive and offensive strategies, which span the range from conservative to aggressive styles of play, will help the beginning coach make a tactical plan to suit his team. This book provides a blueprint methodology for many of the elements of coaching. Coaches should use it but not be limited by it. I encourage each coach to creatively augment this formula with his own drills, plays, systems and tactics. A team sport, hockey is often referred to as a feeder game, similar to basketball, lacrosse and soccer. Outstanding individual skills are important, but it is the display of teamwork during the execution of hockey tactics that allows winning clubs to excel. Hockey is an intense, physical game of skill, in which success is tied to a sound underlying framework. In this sense, it resembles jazz. Both jazz and hockey demand basic skills. Each also demands improvisation from individual players who can contribute something extra. Individuals play off each other and constantly adjust to one another. In hockey, just as in jazz, too much planning can ruin everything. Similarly, team success depends on coaching leadership that fosters athletic discipline and shapes winning team strategies without inhibiting the spirit of competition and the freewheeling enthusiasm that has characterized generations of backyard

games.

Since the publishing of this book, Micheal Smith has become the General Manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs. After reading his book, I can understand why. Mr. Smith's insights into hockey coaching are very easy to follow, with increasing skill level for various ages, from 8 year olds to junior. He covers all aspects of hockey coaching, from preseason preparation, including off ice drills and individual skill development, through to description of systems for defence and offence. Well balanced that covers a lot.

All in all, I picked up very few ideas from this generally bland manual, and the illustrations (clay figurish poseables) can, in their most flattering light, be described as abstract (or boring or unhelpful). There is not a single photo of an actual hockey player in the entire book. Large sections provide mostly-irrelevant info, in a well printed format trimmed in color. Towards the back there is some basic strategy that is useful, but as w/ many hockey manuals, these require a great deal of patience to piece together from the diagrams--nothing new.

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