

Basics of Indoor

Thinking about Indoor Hockey – How to Play

The Indoor Hockey Channel has been created as a one-stop-shop for coaching and training resources / advice. The aim is to build the portal into a valuable knowledge base for coaches at all levels. This extract from the site has been requested by KHCL Leuven for use by club trainers and coaches for the 2018-19 Indoor season.

All sources will be acknowledged in full: should you feel that anything already posted has not received proper acknowledgement, please let us know.

If you have additional material that you can share with others, then please let me know and I will add it to the site. [Gordon James / gordon.james(at)skynet.be]

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Underlying site should be made available by end of November. Please stay tuned:

<https://sites.Google.com/view/khcl-training>

Some overview points are made on this page (below) that should usefully be read together with the rest of the Drills and Exercises: Thinking about Indoor Hockey - How to Play.

Getting Going - The Basics / Refresh

The main set of resources is on the Indoor Drills/Exercises/Tactics/Etc page and can be accessed using the links at the top of this page. For those working with the very youngest players some Belgian Federation "Hockey4Fun" material has been linked separately.

THINKING ABOUT INDOOR HOCKEY - "HOW TO PLAY"

Here are some thoughts on what makes Indoor different to Outdoor hockey, and on the building blocks that go to make successful players and teams. *[Acknowledgement: edit from FieldHockeyForum/Indoor]*

Indoor Basics: Basics are incredibly important. The pitch is smaller, the ball is lighter and faster, and 1st touch is critical. Controlling the ball on the reverse is difficult (the ball pops up very easily) so passes MUST whenever possible be made to the open stick. The extra time it takes to transfer the ball from the reverse to the open side does not help either. This requires technical ability, but it makes the individual player and the team that much quicker and therefore that much better.

Playing with a style based firmly on Open Side and One Touch is the gold standard!

It also limits any opportunity for the opposition to press the ball carrier (the recipe for disaster indoors, especially since no 3D to help get out of trouble).

In addition to Open Side / One Touch, players need to be LOW: not just Outdoors low, but even lower.

Time needs to be spent on all this (especially with juniors) so that players really do absorb these essential basic techniques.

Team Shape:

- The common basic team shape looks like the 5 dots on a dice: 2-1-2, with the GK sweeping the circle behind the defenders. When the team is out of possession and in the middle third of the pitch, the 2 forwards will be slightly narrower than the 2 defenders and will work together with the centre player to cut off all passing lanes. [The boards can be left free as long as the centre and the defenders are able to step in front of their opponent to take the ball.] As the opposition players switch the ball across the width of the pitch, the dice moves to continue to block the passing lanes while keeping the basic shape and essentially waiting for the opposition to give them the ball.

When outletting from the defence to the forwards, the ball is passed repeatedly until the opponent's dice is pulled out of shape. This will often require multiple lateral passes (ie across the pitch), but all the players need to be looking for a forward pass whenever the opportunity arises. In attack, the team is trying either to break the gain line on their (stronger) right hand side in order to create 2 v 1s against the weaker left side of the defence or to build space down the left so that the ball can be transferred deep to a leading forward who will receive open side.

- Playing down the right can mean forwards are receiving the ball on the reverse, which is technically more difficult, but clever use of angled passes off the boards can turn the pass into one to the open side here as well.
- The dice shape can easily change, for example from 2-1-2 to 1-2-2 where a single deep player controls the outletting and has a greater choice of forward passes.
- Overall, the game is based on fluid movement, with players rotating around the pitch in order to open up forward passes and to provide support to the ball carrier.
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Boards:

- The boards provide an extra passing dimension and the skills needed to use them to best advantage require quite a bit of practice. Note, however, that carrying the ball near the boards makes it easier for the opposition to close you down, and players need to think about getting a good distance away (3m?) if they want to open up the extra passing options that the boards provide. Players moving right to left to receive the ball will necessarily end up closer to the left boards, but even if that is the case if they stay strong on receiving the ball and roll infield again they will both be driving down the weaker side of the opponent and will have a greater range of pass options.
- What needs to be generally avoided is any sequence of passes that continues to go left, then left, then left again, etc otherwise it is too easy for the defence to shut down the next pass or the ball carrier.

Marking, Rotations, Goalkeeping

Marking: The focus needs to be on taking the ball before it gets to the intended receiver. Thus real effort needs to be made to step in front of the opponent and take the ball early, and to avoid letting the opponent take the ball and only then tackle. The defence can allow the attack to use the boards as long as either mark in front, or from a position where taking the ball early can be done effectively. A certain amount of physical aggression will be needed to avoid being knocked off the ball, and here again a low body position helps maintain a low centre of gravity and allows a strong stick position to take the ball.

Rotation: [More needed here]..... Anti-clockwise rotation by the centre and the 2 forwards can be used until the ball can be passed into the deep/high area in the far left corner - a key position for attacking the goal. Etc Etc.

Goalkeeping: The way an indoor GK plays is very different to outdoor. He/She is much more active, and the best GK will dominate the circle and "sweep" together with the defenders. It is physically difficult for young players to be so active, but as soon as the player has the necessary combination of speed, strength, size and judgement he/she should be encouraged to be far more than just a "shot stopper". Many coaches work on the GK always taking the ball carrier in the circle while the outfield take the supporting attackers

The Benefits of Indoor:

- There is no doubt that Indoor hockey improves your game.....More contact with the ball; improves ball retention and awareness;
- Appropriate push passing technique both statically and in progressive situations;
- Fake passing/elimination skills;
- Specific hockey mobility and enhancement of the main physical areas due to a more permanent need of a 'lower' body playing style;
- Swift and reactive dynamics;
- Indian dribbling style mostly due to a better stick/body angle to the ball and also because of a better stick movement towards (close shape in diagonal) and proximity to the ball which increases speed of contact and change of ball direction;
- Defence: Engaging, delaying, blocking, channeling, 1×2, 2×3, re-positioning (counter control), ball protection, etc;
- Attack: dribbling skills in small spaces, passing criteria, 1-2 situations, counter attack, scoring positioning in a smaller space, ball protection, etc;
- Decision making in smaller areas, etc,etc...
- Indoor also shows no mercy for individual weaknesses or mistakes, and is a sharp, edgy and purist game.

GETTING GOING - THE BASICS / REFRESH

Whether you are taking young players through their first steps in Indoor Hockey or whether you are simply refreshing things with more experienced players coming back to indoor after playing outdoors, there are some essential basics that need to be introduced or refreshed - often no matter how experienced or able the players are.

Older juniors (U14/16/19 players) are often experienced at Indoor, so should only be needing to refresh what they already know plus get them back into the all-important changes to body, feet and stick positioning in contrast to Outdoor. It is also true, however, that trainers need to insist on these same basics with younger players in order to lay down the foundations for their development as indoor hockey players in future years.

First sessions should focus on the following:

1. Basics / Refresh:Body / Stick Position
 - The Indoor Pass / Receive
 - Tackling / Blocking
 - Passing / Receiving on the Move
 - Dribbling incl Hook Dribble and Check Right
 - PC Attack and PC Defence – the Basics
 - GK Basics (very different to outdoor!)
 - DICE Formation / Basic Tactics in Defence and Attack
2. Using the Boards
3. Rotations for Forwards
4. Combinations
5. Fast Plays / Overloads / Shooting + Scoring
6. Defence / Pressing

"INDOOR 4 FUN"

The very youngest players usually take to Indoor Hockey like a duck to water. They love the extra engagement and action, plus the small team focus that carries over from Outdoor. Some nations run special Indoor competitions that target Under 7s and Under 8s: Indoor 4 Fun is set up by the Belgian Federation with this in mind, using almost all the normal rules and skills but deleting PCs and some other aspects.

The simple initiation programme shown below is used to introduce the players to the game, though it does assume that the players are already playing at least some outdoor hockey and are familiar with the basics concepts from that.

A 45 minute Initiation session has the following building blocks:

- Specific Indoor Rules
- Basic Skills (Push / Using Boards / Low Forehand Stop / Hook Dribble)
- Basic Tactics (5 Eyes of a Dice / the "Z" in outletting and attack)

Additional material to support the above is available in the following downloads:

1. [Indoor 4 Fun Rules and Skills Summary \(File 1 below\)](#) [Target : U7 – U8 / Intent: Indoor Hockey Initiation]
2. [Indoor 4 Fun Drills for Basic Skills and Tactics \(File 2 below\)](#) [First Set of Drills and Exercises for U7 - U8]
3. [Indoor 4 Fun Training Package \(1 hour\) \(File 3 below\)](#) [Second Set of Drills and Exercises for U7 - U8 (in French)]

Notes

Note: It is important to include Pass+Receive on the Move drills in every session if possible (eg as part of warm-up) since without mastering this it is difficult to do much else of real value.

All training sessions should include time for a match using the full pitch if possible, combining with any other group using the pitch / hall as necessary. Try not to have too many players on the pitch at one time (max 6 field players per team): better to make 3 teams of 5 or 6 and rotate them, or even 4 teams of 5, etc, etc. Cannot learn indoor hockey when space is too tight. If you do not have 2 GK, block the goal(s) with benches or chairs etc: always make the players work to score and encourage them to lift the ball into the goal to score whenever possible.

Ideally, spend 50% of the time available on drills / exercises and use the rest for a coached match (ie you keep coaching the players as they play, and stop the game when necessary to make key points / point out errors / reinforce good play). Game play is a good vehicle for learning, and the players enjoy it more anyway.