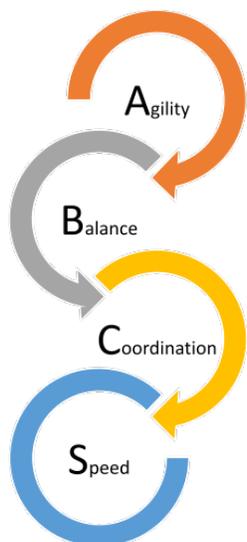




Field Hockey Canada Coach Resource: The ABCS of physical literacy



Developing the ABCS (agility, balance, coordination, speed) of physical literacy is an important part of the development of an athlete and should be considered by coaches as a necessary component to every training session.

There are a number of activities in which these skills can be learned and refined in field hockey. Coaches can be innovative in developing drills, activities and games to help develop the ABCS in athletes.

Warm-up and introductory activities

You can incorporate the ABCS of physical literacy into the warm-up and introductory activities of your training sessions. Use the following examples, and focus and modify them based on how you want to develop agility, balance, coordination and/or speed:

- running
- jumping
- throwing
- kicking
- catching

Prediction and interception

Prediction and interception are 2 other skills within physical literacy whose importance is less obvious but that can support the development of fundamental movement in athletes. Athletes who know how to use these skills also learn how to practise and make good decisions in different sport situations.



Think for a moment about what it takes to receive a field hockey ball hit across the field. As the receiver, the athlete needs to be able to:

- See the ball leave the stick and **predict** where it will travel
- Move to where they think the ball will go, and be there when the ball arrives
 - This is the ability to **intercept** the ball, which is a physical literacy skill that needs to be learned
- Receive the ball

Because field hockey is a stick sport, this ability to **predict** and **intercept** is a critical skill. Athletes need to predict where the ball is going and then react in such a way that the moving stick makes solid contact with the moving ball.

Learning to predict and intercept requires 3 things:

1. lots of opportunities to try to catch, intercept and hit different-sized and different-shaped objects moving in many different directions at many different speeds
 - Many children find it much harder to do this with small balls moving slowly than with balls moving a bit faster
2. good instruction, particularly about how to position the body and what to look for
3. sufficient maturation of the brain and vision, which usually happens between the ages of 4 and 7

Equipment for working on the ABCS

When developing the ABCS in community field hockey, it is helpful to have a variety of equipment, such as sticks and balls of different sizes, to practise catching, throwing, hitting and receiving.

An athlete who can perform the ABCS and other fundamental movement sport skills (such as running, jumping, catching, kicking, throwing, and hitting something with a stick, bat or racquet), can learn to play many sports with ease. Skills fundamental to specific sports are often natural progressions from fundamental movement skills.