



Field Hockey Canada Resource: Four Phases of Movement Making Intervention and Giving Feedback

Four Phases of Movement

For athletes, learning the correct field hockey skill technique is important. However, perfect technique should not be the coaches primary focus.

If an athlete is able to produce the correct outcome, with incorrect technique this is ok! We want to develop athletes with the freedom for creativity, invention, and flexibility with a love for the game.

- If the outcome is good, then the perfect technique may not be critical.
- If the outcome is not good, then coaches must make knowledgeable interventions to support the athlete's learning process.

When learning what and how to give constructive and specific corrections within your feedback it is helpful for a coach to understand the four phases of movement. This concept is also covered in the [NCCP Module Coach Initiation in Sport](#)

Preparation – The Preparation phase includes setup necessary to execute the skill correct and could involve the athlete's body positioning related to the field (vision), knee bend, footwork, stick positioning, grip, ball position, or backswing.

Force Production – This phase includes the action necessary to execute the skill and could involve a change in grip, change in ball position or movement, transfer of weight, core rotation, specific body movements to create/change/control speed of the ball or the player

Critical Instant – This phase includes the specific instant where the skill is executed and the beginning of the transition to the next phase/skill. For example, contact of the stick/ball in release for distribution skill (push, hit, sweep) or it could be the specific instant that the stick and ball meet in a reception to maintain control of the ball.

Follow Through – This phase is the Recovery or transition from the technical execution of the specific skill. It could include such things as the stick follow through, or body momentum/step though on a distribution skill. OR the transition between reception of a ball and moving into a carry skill.

All skills can be broken down into these specific phases and it is helpful in determining where mistakes are being made, and identifying the most critical feedback to give in order to improve performance.



Using the 4 Phases of Movement for Constructive Feedback

All skills can be broken down into 4 specific phases:

1. Preparation
2. Force Production
3. Critical Instant
4. Follow Through

Knowing them is helpful in determining where mistakes are being made, and identifying the most critical feedback to give in order to improve performance. To help you further understand the 4 phases of movement, and how to give feedback to athletes in each phase, let's look at two examples:

Example 1: Long Handle Hit

Phase	Distribution Skills – Long Handle Hit	Common Errors
Preparation	<p>The preparation phase for a hit includes carrying a moving ball with consideration for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body Positioning – good hockey stance and carry position. Knees bent, eyes up • Footwork sequence to setup side on hit, (left foot ahead / right foot back) • Ball positioning off right foot but moving in line toward the target. • Grip – basic grip, hands together at the top of the stick • Backswing – wrists and elbows at 90 degrees, and face of stick remains open (not facing the ground) • Weight on back foot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to hit a stationary ball • Feet (toes) facing the wrong direction • Grip is wrong – hands twisted or ‘V’ pointing at the flat face of stick. • Hands apart • No weight transfer – weight on front foot or equally balanced. • Ball positioning too far in front or behind in stance. • Ball positioning too close to feet. <p>Grip/stick twists on back swing – face of stick pointing to ground.</p>
Force Production	<p>The force production phase is the creation of power with consideration for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball moving forward in the stance toward left foot, a comfortable distance from the body (not too close to the feet) • Forward Swing initiates with hip, core and shoulder rotation (similar to a baseball swing) • Shift weight from back(right) to front (left) foot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball is stationary • Swing initiated with arm movement – forcing the stick through the ball with arm strength only. • No core rotation • No weight transfer
Critical Instant	<p>The critical instant phase is the moment that the stick impacts the ball within the forward swing. consider</p>	<p>Face of stick is not perpendicular to the ball on impact.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angle of the stick face, 90 degrees to the turf and square with the ball and target 	
Follow Through	<p>The follow through phase is the action taken immediately following the critical instant of the skill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stick in direction of target • Slight roll over of right hand • Step through with right foot toward target (common mistake in athletes is to stand up and step behind the left leg – we must encourage athletes to step toward the target and finish in an athletic and ready stance) • Head and shoulders low, knees bent. • Stick follows through toward target • Footwork forward to carry momentum to target 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trailing leg (right foot) steps behind front leg (left foot) after impact • Head and shoulders pop up – upright standing position • Stick does not follow through to target, or follows through high up and over the athlete's shoulder.

Example 2: Forehand Open Reception.

Phase	Forehand Open Reception	Common Errors
Preparation	<p>The preparation phase for an open reception includes consideration for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body positioning – good hockey stance, knees bent, eyes up and stick on the ground. • Basic grip with hands apart. • Anticipation of positioning and footwork to be in space for reception. • Anticipation of ball speed and path of ball. • Step toward the path of the ball. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athlete is stationary. • Athlete has 2 feet planted directly behind path to ball. • Athlete's stick is not on the ground. • Upright/standing position.
Force Production	There is no force production within a reception skill.	
Critical Instant	<p>The critical instant phase is the moment that the stick makes contact with the ball:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open receptions make contact with the ball on the right foot, allowing the ball to travel across the body with the momentum of the distribution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athlete does not cushion the ball and therefore the ball rebounds off the stick. • Athlete stops the ball in a closed position – no vision of the field.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angle of the stick face, 90 degrees to the turf and square with the ball and target • Action of the stick to cushion the impact. • First touch on the ball sets up the next movement or skill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athlete must take multiple touches to bring the ball under control. • First touch puts the athlete into pressure.
Follow Through	<p>The follow through phase is the action taken immediately following securing the ball to the stick:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep “Stick on Ball”. • Transition immediately to a carry position or next distribution set up. • Change the direction of the ball/angle of attack to create space and time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athlete is not in motion. • Eyes are down and does not have vision of next steps. • Athlete is slow to transition to next skill.

Giving Feedback

Feedback can be defined as Information children receive about their performance of a skill or activity. The way feedback is delivered can have a profound effect on a child’s self-esteem, research has repeatedly shown that children are especially affected by the comments their coaches make. This means that feedback must be constructive and geared helping the athlete improve their skill execution and performance.

Here are some guidelines to consider:

1. **Use the most appropriate form of feedback.** Feedback can take many forms, so be sure to vary your feedback. While much feedback is verbal, demonstrating and reinforcing skills can be more effective at certain points in the learning process.

2. **Keep it short and simple.** Use simple words and easy-to-understand language.

More is not always better. Giving feedback too often can make learners so dependent on it that performance suffers when the feedback is removed.

3. **Don’t rush your feedback:**

Give learners time to figure out how things are going. Giving feedback too quickly can interfere with learners processing their own feedback and with their ability to evaluate their own performance.

Before giving feedback, ask learners to describe their own errors. This will help learners get better at evaluating their own performance.



4. **Be positive and constructive, not destructive or negative.** Strike a balance between encouraging things done well and pointing out areas for improvement. For example, “Your bounce pass has improved since last practice. The next step is to try to direct the ball where your teammate is going to be.”
5. **Be specific and informative.** Vague feedback doesn’t help learners as much as concise, precise feedback. Instead of telling a diver who didn’t rotate enough to try harder, say something more like “You didn’t rotate enough on that dive; next time tuck tighter.” And instead of “Nice one!” say “I like the way you caught the ball with both hands.”
6. **Focus on what you want to improve.** State what you want to happen: “Next time you do a bounce pass, I want you to extend your arms.” Avoid talking about what you don’t want to happen: “Stop dropping the ball” will only plant the suggestion to do just that!
7. **Target only what learners can control.** Give feedback only on the aspects of performance that learners can actually change.

WHAT to feedback?

At the Community level, Coaches should focus on;

- Fundamental Movement Skill
- Sport Skill / Decision Making
- Sport Skill / Technique

At in Competition levels, coaches should focus on development of Sport Skill, techniques, decision making and tactical application of skills.

TYPES of feedback

There are a number of different types of feedback that can and should be combined to help you, as a community coach, see improvement in your athlete’s performance.

Concurrent Feedback

Concurrent feedback is information provided to the athlete during their performance.

- Could be verbal cues, tips, reminders and simple corrections that can be communicated constantly throughout each activity.
- Verbal cues and feedback can be targeted at a specific athlete, or may be directed generally to the group, all athletes will hear this feedback and it will remind them to reflect on their own technique and execution.

Terminal Feedback



Terminal feedback is information provided to the athlete before or after their performance is complete.

- Can be given in a sidebar to an individual athlete – stop their activity, pull them aside and give feedback
- Can be given to the entire group,
- typically used when a common mistake is being made, or to reinforce coaching points and key details at a stopping point in the activity.

Intrinsic Feedback

Intrinsic feedback is information given to provide the athlete with regard to their movement and execution using kinesthetic senses (feelings from muscles, joints, balance)

- This includes adjustments made to technical details such as grip, body positioning, ball positioning, power production, follow through, vision, and other components related to their phases of movement (skill preparation, action or recovery)

Extrinsic Feedback

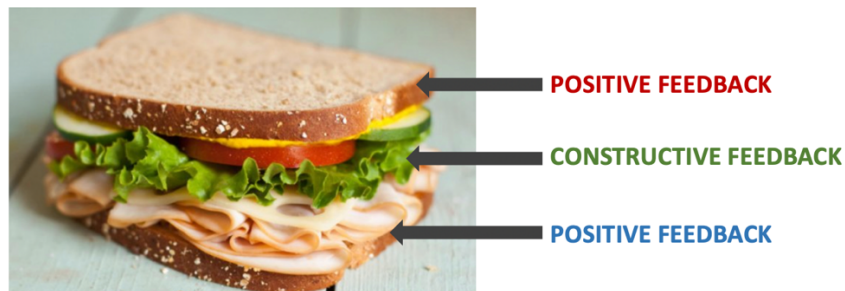
Extrinsic feedback is information not inherent to the athlete's movement itself, but which improves intrinsic feedback such as;

- Use of video feedback or analysis – allows the athlete to establish a kinaesthetic reference for the correct movement. Ie Athlete can see that their grip is incorrect and the ball positioning in their set up is not allowing a good release for their hit.
- Use of time, number of reps or distance covered in feedbacking results. Ie. Athlete can see that in a timed passing activity, they made 15 successful passes in set one and 23 successful passes in set two.

HOW to feedback

Effectively communicated feedback is essential to the development of your athletes. If an athlete feels safe and supported, they are more likely to react positively to the correction and make changes in their performance. The best way to make sure this happens is to always frame your feedback within a "FEEDBACK SANDWICH"

Within the sandwich, the coach first identifies something the athlete is doing well, then will make a specific and informative correction regarding something they can try in order to improve the performance, and finish the feedback with another encouraging statement to motivate the athlete.



Some examples of a feedback sandwich can be found in the chart below:



Situation	Feedback Sandwich
An athlete passes the ball technically correctly, but to the wrong player	Wow, great ball speed on that pass! Make sure you keep your eyes up so you send the pass to an open teammate. Let's try again I know you can do it!
An athlete finishes the activity first but has missed parts of the activity	You were so fast, I've never seen anyone go that fast. Way to go! Since you're done early, why don't you try the activity again? This time, make sure you go around the cones twice. Since it won't be a race this time, you can go slowly and work on your technique. Great job.
A child pushes another child down in a race	Johnny, I liked how you swung your arms when you were running. When you swing your arms, you need to keep them to yourself. It's not appropriate to push someone else down. Do you think you can swing the arms without touching anyone or pushing anyone? I think you can.
A child starts to cry after failing to perform the skill	That's a hard skill isn't it? Even though the ball didn't go where you wanted it to, your footwork was excellent. Let's break it down slowly now. If you follow through with your stick toward the target, the ball will go in the right direction. I bet you can do it. Are you ready to try again? I'll help you.
An athlete is afraid to try the activity and so sneaks to the back of the line to avoid his or her turn	Pull the child aside: Jane, you're always very quick at picking up new techniques. Do you want to practise over here slowly and when you feel comfortable you can join in the line? I know you'll be great at this.

Some examples of ineffective feedback include:

- ◆ Positive, but not informative or constructive: "Good try."
- ◆ Informative feedback that focuses on what NOT to do: "Stop raising your arm." "Don't do ...X..."
- ◆ Critical or negative comments about the individual: "If you weren't so lazy, you'd be able to do this." "This is so easy, why can't you do it"

When communicating feedback consider the following:

- ✓ Be Positive
- ✓ Be specific about what you want the athlete to do
- ✓ Timing, when is the best time to give this feedback?
- ✓ Comment positively on Effort
- ✓ Always about the behavior or action, never about the athlete
- ✓ Communicate at their level. Children are not mini-adults.
- ✓ Make sure your Body language, tone, and words are telling the same story.

After giving feedback, always let your athletes try the skill or activity again. Watch/Observe and encourage them as they try new things!