



## Introduction

On behalf of Special Olympics International, THANK YOU for contributing your time and expertise. The knowledge you share with the course participants will make a significant impact on the lives of athletes with intellectual disabilities and their coaches.

The Volunteer Coach Course offers a basic introduction to coaching Special Olympics floor hockey. The course should be relevant to coaches involved with Special Olympics athletes of low and average ability. Higher-level skills and tactics are introduced in the Advanced Coach Course and in NGB and other coaching accreditation programs.

### **Coaches should leave the training school with a clear understanding of the following:**

- Official Special Olympics floor hockey events, including rules
- How to use the Special Olympics Floor Hockey Coaching Guide
- How to organize a training session
- Techniques for warm-up and stretching
- How to teach the fundamental of Floor Hockey
- Ideas for appropriate drills and activities to teach the basic skills
- How to set up the Individual Skills Contest
- How to teach Special Olympics Athletes the rules and basic rules of floor hockey

Review the Quick Quiz at the end of this guide to identify the main points and ensure that they are covered within the course.

### **Suggestions for Instructors**

- **Review the Special Olympics Floor Hockey Coaching Guide.** It provides the necessary background to our coaching program.
- **Stay on schedule.** There is a lot of material to be covered, and it is easy to fall behind. Remember, this course is an overview. Encourage coaches to take additional coaching courses and continue their education.
- **Use team teaching.** Two instructors can bring different expertise to the course and also make this course more enjoyable for the participants. It is suggested that one instructor be a specialist in softball and the other in Special Olympics.

Your ideas on the course are welcomed. Please send any ideas for future improvement to the SOI Floor Hockey Director, Special Olympics International, 1133 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.



## Floor Hockey Volunteer Coach Training School

### **PART 1 Classroom Session (90 minutes)**

- 1.0 Introduction and Using the Special Olympics Floor Hockey Coaching Guide
- 1.1 Special Olympics Coaching Philosophy
- 1.2 Coaching Resources
- 1.3 Athlete Assessment
- 1.4 Special Olympics Floor Hockey Events and Rules
- 1.5 Preparing for Your Floor Hockey Program
- 1.6 Eight-Week Training and Competition Plan
- 1.7 Organizing a Training Session
- 1.8 Prevention of Injuries
- 1.9 Coaching Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities
- 1.10 Introduction to Floor Hockey Video

### **PART 2 Activity Session (120 minutes)**

- 2.1 Warm-ups and Stretching
- 2.2 Basic Skills
- 2.3 Floor Hockey Individual Skills Competition
- 2.4 Teaching the Game

### **PART 3 Special Olympics Athletes Training Session (90 minutes)**

- 3.1 Model Training Session
  - Warm-Up and Stretching
  - Skills Drills
  - Practice Game

### **PART 4 Classroom Wrap-Up (30 minutes)**

- 4.1 Review (Questions)
- 4.2 Quick Quiz
- 4.3 Certification Process and Application
- 4.4 Training School Evaluation

### **Materials**

- Course Agendas (one per participant)
- Special Olympics Floor Hockey Coaching Guide
- Other recommended coaching books/videos for display

### **Equipment**

- 1 stick, puck, shin guards, gloves, and helmet per participant
- 2 sets of goalie equipment (pads, waffle boards, helmet, glove, goalie stick)
- 12 plastic marker cones, 1 measuring tape, 1 roll of “safe” floor marking tape, 2 stopwatches, 5 clipboards, first-aid kit and water





**PART 1**

**Classroom Session**

(90 minutes – Approximately 10 minutes per session)

**1.1 Introduction and the Using the Special Olympics Floor Hockey Coaching Guide**

- Introduce yourself, including your coaching background.
- Ask participants to briefly introduce themselves.
- Review the course objectives and agenda.
- Introduce and review the Special Olympics Floor Hockey Coaching Guide. Refer to it as you go through the course.

**1.1 Special Olympics Coaching Philosophy**

- The use of the word “**Olympic**” means a commitment to high standards of coaching.
- **Training and safety** are critical for athlete development.
- Coaches must continually challenge athletes to push on to new levels of achievement.
- In Special Olympics, athletes train to **compete**. Refer to oath: “Let Me Win, But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”
- Life-long fitness and the ability to enjoy recreational activities is an important by-product of Special Olympics.

**1.2 Coaching Resources**

- Involve the family members.
- Encourage coaches to join local floor hockey associations/organizations.
- Promote **SOI coaching courses**.
- Stress the importance of **assistant coaches and Partners Clubs®** with High Schools and colleges. (Many Special Olympics athletes need individualized attention in order to progress.) Utilize field hockey and ice hockey programs.
- Provide examples of coaching books and videos.

**1.3 Athlete Assessment**

- All athletes must be medically certified to participate in Special Olympics (review the Special Olympics **medical form**).
- All athletes with Down Syndrome must have an **Atlantoaxial X-ray** and test negative in order to play team floor hockey.
- Coaches will encounter athletes of all levels of abilities. Try to **individualize** training and competition placement to benefit each player and team.
- Assess athletes several times a season to identify growth and encourage development.





PART 1 (Continued)

1.4 Special Olympics Floor Hockey Events and Rules

- Various floor hockey events have been designed for all ability levels.
  - The **Individual Skills Contest (ISC)** is appropriate for all athletes.
  - Team Floor Hockey** is appropriate for all athletes.
  - Unified Sports® Floor Hockey** can be enjoyed by players of all levels.
- Highlight the rules for Special Olympics floor hockey.
- Divisioning allows players to compete against those of comparable abilities and ages.
- Review the official Floor Hockey Skills Assessment Tests. These SATs (which is the Individual Skills Contest) are used by the Divisioning Committees to facilitate the preliminary classification of teams for divisioning.

1.5 Preparing for Your Floor Hockey Program

- List the minimum **equipment** needed in order to conduct a training session.
- Emphasize the importance of **quality equipment** and **good uniforms**.
- Provide names of **dealers** who will supply quality equipment at a low cost.

1.6 Eight-Week Training and Competition Plan

- Athletes should **practice at least three hours a week** in order to show significant improvement. Two one and one-half sessions are recommended.
- **A season training plan** helps coaches allocate time effectively to different coaching themes.
- A team needs **to compete regularly**. Review the competition opportunities offered at the Chapter, Area or Sectional levels. Coaches may need to take the initiative to organize their own games.
- A player's progress throughout the season can be charted using the **Assessment Record**.
- Parents, families, and group home leaders are important resources to help athletes **TRAIN AT HOME**. Review the home training materials in the Coaching Guide.





PART 1 (Continued)

1.7 Organizing a Training Session

- Emphasize the effectiveness of a **written training plan**.
- Outline a simple training plan:
  - Warm-Up and Stretching
  - Basic Skills Instruction
  - Competition Experience (Scrimmage)
  - Cool-Down

1.8 Prevention of Injuries

- **Safety** is a coach's number one priority.
- **Check the floor** for safety hazards before each practice.
- Establish **training rules** to minimize accidents.
- Have an **emergency action plan** and practice it.

1.9 Coaching Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities

- Establish clear **rules** to help athletes understand exactly what is expected of them as well as to reduce behavior problems.
- **Break down skills** and concepts into simple parts.
- Use **one-part instructions** and "**Key Words**" to explain and reinforce technical skill components.
- Instruct and demonstrate, but also coach through asking appropriate *questions*. **Challenge players to think for themselves.**
- Be aware of **physical impairments** that affect the way players hear, see, or pay attention.
- Establish a consistent **pre-game/halftime/post-game routine** at competitions.
- **Ask attendees** to suggest any of their own coaching tips. Write them down to supplement your own coaching portfolio.





**PART 2**  
**Activity Session**  
(120 minutes)

**2.1 Warm-Up and Stretching Exercises [15 minutes]**

*Activities*

- Set up a large court. Every participant has a stick, puck, helmet with face mask, and shin guards.
- Instruct coaches to walk slowly, avoiding collisions.
- Practice some basic moves.
- Stop and stretch: calves/groin/hamstrings.
- Perform other warm-up activities with puck.
- Stop and stretch: quads/upper body.
- Finish with a fun passing game.

*Teaching Suggestions*

- Alternate active passing with stretching. This helps maintain interest and warm up muscles, which makes stretching more effective.
- Instruct proper stretching technique. For example, demonstrate slow stretching and no bouncing.
- Have an athlete demonstrate a stretch while the coaches focus on assisting lower ability athletes.

**2.2 Basic Skills [60 minutes]**

In this short period of time, identify and demonstrate the basic technical components and fundamental skills of floor hockey. Provide additional and simple activities to teach Special Olympics athletes these skills. Refer to the Coaching Guide for appropriate activities.

**Note:** There will not be time to demonstrate activities for all the skills in just one hour. Set up activities for shooting, passing and goalkeeping; simply review the technical components of offense, defense, and face-offs.

*Teaching Suggestions*

- Involve as many participants as possible and make this an **active session**.
- Use “**Key Words**” rather than technical explanations. **Keep it simple!**



Activities for Teaching Basic Skills

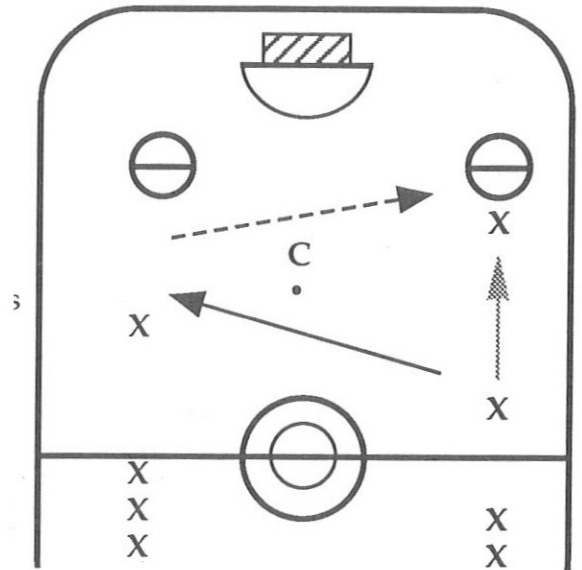
**Basic Skill #1: PASSING**

**2-on-1 Breakaway**

- Divide athletes into two groups.
- Form two single file lines on both sides of the center circle.
- A coach stands as a stationary defender in the playing area about 8-12 yards directly in front of the goal.
- Two athletes advance toward the goal as they pass the puck between them.
- Each pair is given 10 seconds to shoot on goal.
- Goalie returns puck to the coach after each save.

**Key Words**

- “Head Up”
- “Use the Spin Move”
- “Look for the Open Player”
- “Stay Out of the Crease”
- “Pass the Puck”
- “No High Sticking”



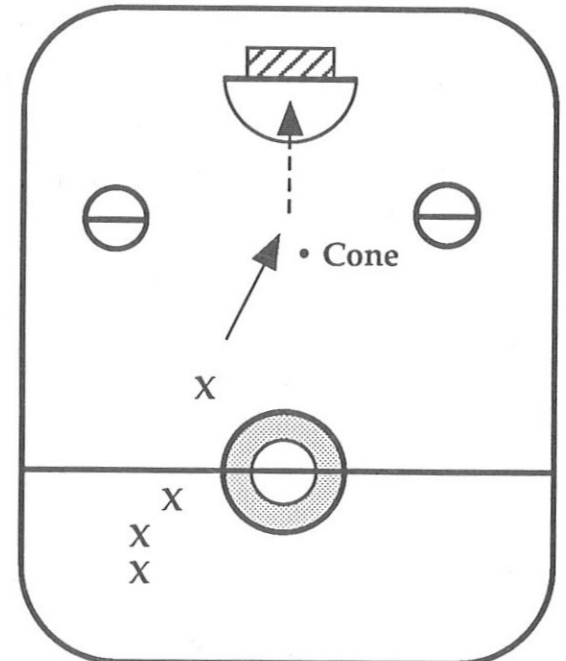
**Basic Skill #2: SHOOTING**

**Breakaway**

- Line up players in single file at center court.
- Use sieve covering, then a goalie.
- Place cone 8-12 yards in front of the goal.
- Players stickhandle puck towards the goal.
- Without stopping, the athlete shoots on goal from near the cone.
- Instruct athletes to aim for the corners: first for the lower right, then for the lower left, next for the upper right and finally for the upper left.

**Key Words**

- “No High Sticking”
- “Stay Out of the Crease”
- “Shoot Early”
- “Aim for the Corner of the Net”
- “Lift the Puck”
- “Look for the Rebound”





Activities for Teaching Basic Skills (continued)

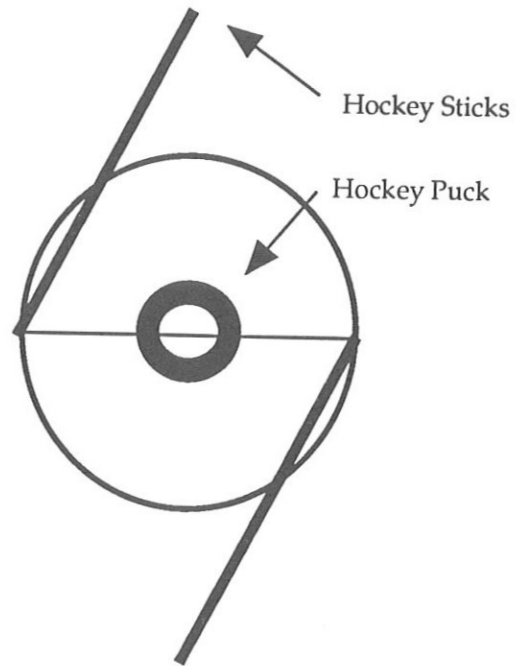
**Basic Skill #3: FACEOFFS**

**King of the Faceoff Circle**

- Have athletes form one single file line.
- Have first two athletes face off against each other, stick tips are on the circle.
- Start with the puck in the center of circle.
- The coach blows the whistle.
- The first athlete to slide puck out of the circle is the winner.
- The winner stays in the circle and faces the next athlete. The other athlete retreats to the back of the line.

**Key Words**

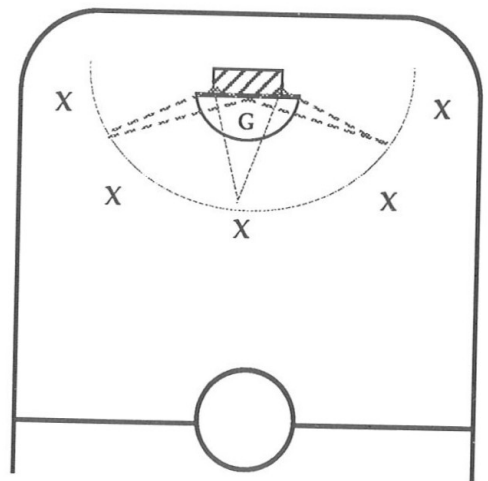
- “Quickness”
- “Sweep the Puck Out of the Faceoff Circle”



**Basic Skill #4: GOALTENDING**

**Cut Down the Angle**

- Tie 20-30 foot strings to each goal post.
- Extend strings in front of goal and bring together.
- While holding strings, slowly walk around to each side of goal in a half-circle movement.
- Instruct goalkeeper to remain inside the crease and in between the strings but to face point where strings come together.
- Inform goalkeeper that these are the angles from which shots on goal will originate. **Note: the sides create the most difficult shooting angles.**
- Place athletes around the half circle.
- Upon coach’s instruction each athlete will shoot on goal one at a time.
- The goalkeeper should change position with each shot to cut down the angle.



**Key Words**

- “Bend at Knees”
- “Stay out Near Crease”
- “Pads together”
- “Stick Flat on Floor”







**PART 2** (Continued)

**2.3 Individual Skills Contest** [30-60 minutes\*]

\*This will vary depending on size of playing area and number of participants.

- Provide an overview of the ISC.
  - Shoot around the Goal
  - Passing
  - Stick-handling
  - Shoot for accuracy
  - Defense
  
- Demonstrate each event and have all coaches run through it.
  - The ISC is designed for all ability athletes.
  - Encourage your Chapter office to offer the ISC at the Chapter competition.

**2.4 Teaching the Game** [30 minutes]

- Demonstrate how the game can be taught using mini-floor hockey.  
Begin with 1v1 and build up to 5v5. (*see “5v5 Scrimmage” on the next page.*)
  
- Review game rules and important aspects of floor hockey.
  - Face-offs
  - Crease violations
  - High sticking and other penalties
  - Goal tending
  - Line rotations (periods)
  
- Explain how, with a few basic pointers, the game itself becomes the best teacher.  
Give athletes the opportunity to play as much as possible. Don't worry if lower ability athletes do not understand all the rules. Give them the experience of being on a team and playing THE GAME.
  
- In competition, coaches should be encouraged to provide sideline encouragement and some basic instructions to athletes with lower ability. However, coaches should LET THE PLAYERS PLAY. Always keep in mind that coaches should never coach an athlete who is in control of the puck. Let the athletes make their own decisions and their own mistakes. Good coaching happens during training and practice times, not during a game.

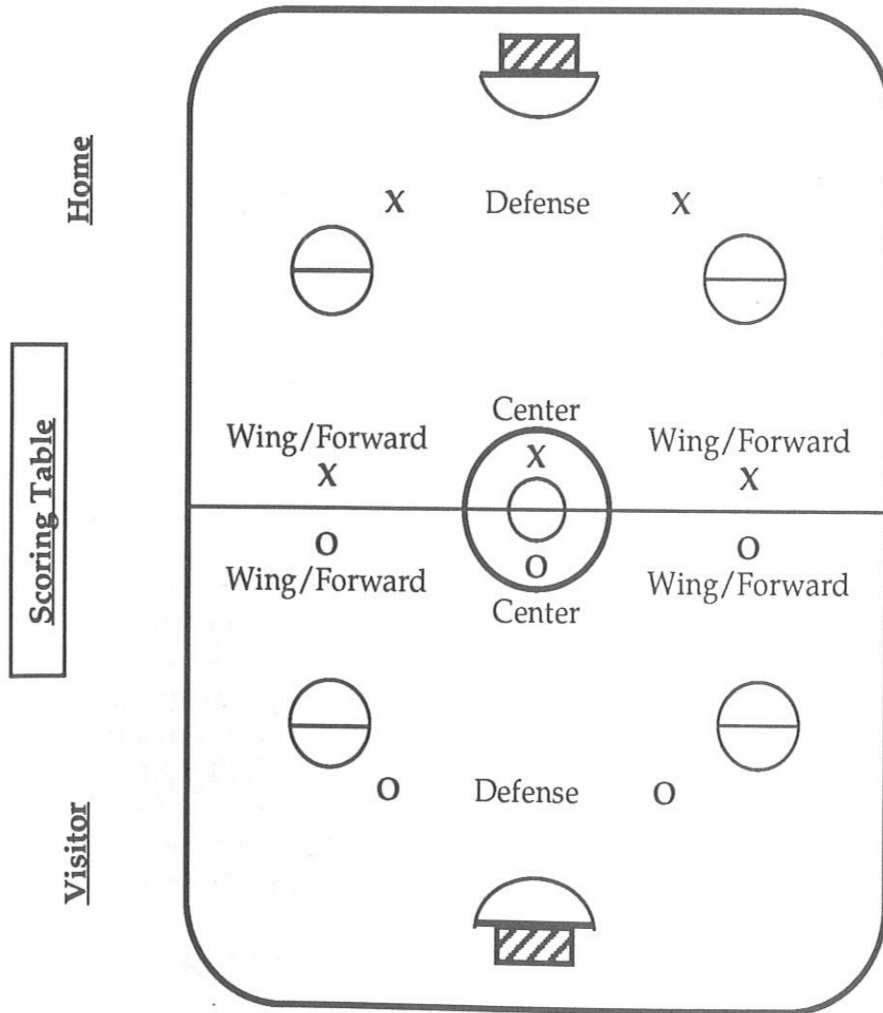




Mini-Floor Hockey: 5v5

Scrimmage

- Separate athletes into teams of five players.
- Line up players in front of scorer's table with numbers facing table.
- Opposing teams wear different colored scrimmage vests.
- Play with two goalkeepers.
- Number the players on each team: 1-2-3-4-5.
- Coach serves as the referee.
- Play in three-minute line rotations (changes).
- Take a one-minute break between each line change.





**PART 3**  
**Special Olympics Athletes Training Session**  
(90 minutes)

**Guidelines**

This part of the training school provides an opportunity for coaches to work directly with Special Olympics athletes and to observe expert instructors demonstrating some of the ideas introduced earlier.

Coaches will benefit from seeing how a complete training session is run. Therefore, we recommend that the instructor run a model training session rather than use only “skills stations” for this part of the training school.

**A minimum of eleven Special Olympics floor hockey players** are needed for this part of the training school.

The instructors should lead this session and involve as many coaches as possible as active training partners.



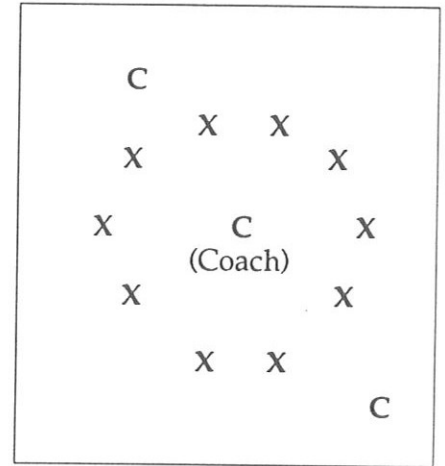


### Model Training Session

#### Warm-Up

- Provide every player with a stick, puck, shin guards, and helmet.
- Introduce some warm-up activities.
- Coach leads first exercise, then asks for volunteers. The volunteers will lead next exercises from the middle of the circle.
- Play a fun game: Coaches play as visiting team.
- Water break

Total time: 15 minutes



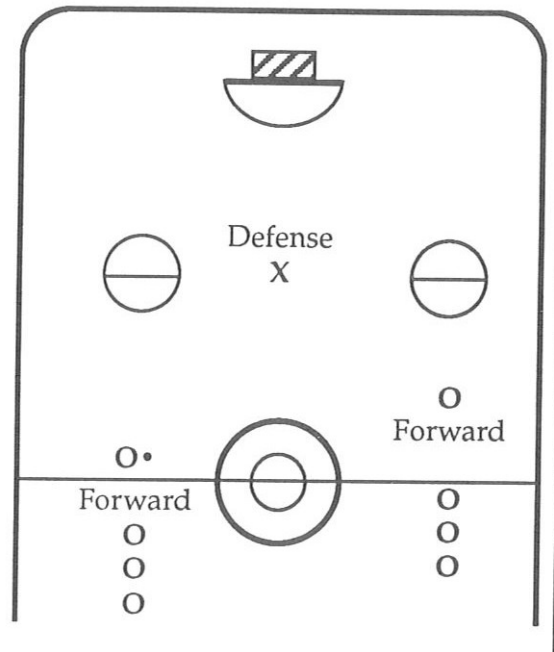
#### Skills Game

Theme: "Attack and Defend"

#### 2-on-1 Breakaway

- Three players participate: 2 forwards, 1 defender and 1 goalkeeper.
- Use one side of the court.
- Forwards pass puck back and forth and attempt to avoid the defender and score.
- After each team of forwards makes an attempt, they proceed to the end of the line.
- One defender will work against five pairs of forwards, then next defenders play.

Total time: 15 minutes



Model Training Session (continued)

**Scrimmage**

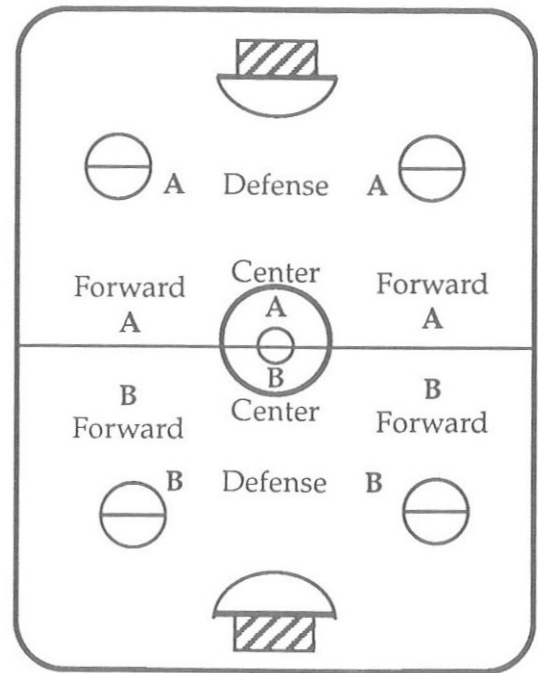
• **Play A line verses B line.**

- Walk through positions. [5 minutes]
- Provide free-play. [5 minutes]
- Play coached game or controlled scrimmage. [10 minutes]
- Review the rules.
- Provide free play. [5 minutes]

• **Cool down** with a light jog and stretches. [5 minutes]

**Total time: 30 minutes**

• **Review and clean up.** [5 minutes]





**PART 4**  
**Classroom Wrap-up Session**  
(30 minutes)

**4.1 Review Questions** [10 minutes]

**4.2 Quick Quiz (see following page)** [10 minutes]

- Ask coaches to complete the Quick Quiz.
- Provide the answers to each question.
- Coaches grade their own quiz.

**4.3 Certification Process and Form** [5 minutes]

- Ask coaches to fill out the first part of the certification form.
- In addition to taking this course on teaching and coaching a specific sport, a Special Olympics coach must do the following in order to achieve certification:
  - Attend a General Orientation as a basic introduction to Special Olympics
  - Complete a course on the basics of teaching and coaching Special Olympics athletes.
  - Complete 10 hours of working with Special Olympics athletes under an experienced coach
  - Complete the training programs for Protective Behaviors and Concussion Training and submit confirmation of completion to the Local Special Olympics Program (U.S. only).
  - Receive endorsement from his/her Program as having fulfilled the above criteria, as well as general screening approval as a suitable individual to work with Special Olympics athletes.

**4.4 Training School Evaluation** [5 minutes]

- Coaches complete the course evaluation and return it before leaving the training school.





Quick Quiz

1. For both safety and effectiveness, there should be at least \_\_\_\_ coaches at every practice.
2. The four main components of a well-organized session are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The five types of participation offered by Special Olympics floor hockey are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The athletes who must be screened by their doctor for atlantoaxial instability are players with \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The first thing a coach should do on arrival at the court is a \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Nine pieces of equipment essential for a well-organized training session are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Players with low ability may require \_\_\_\_\_ as well as verbal instructions.
8. A fun game that can be used to develop stick-handling skills \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The “Key Words” used to effectively teach passing are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The “Key Words” used to effectively teach shooting are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
11. The best way to teach the game to a beginner player is through the use of \_\_\_\_-floor hockey, rather than full scrimmages.
12. The positions on a floor hockey team are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
13. After a violation two players put the puck back into play with a \_\_\_\_\_.
14. For safety, all athletes are required to wear \_\_\_\_\_.
15. Be encouraging from the sidelines, but do not coach a player who \_\_\_\_\_.



Quick Quiz Answers

1. For both safety and effectiveness, there should be at least **two** coaches at every practice.
2. The four main components of a well-organized session are **Warm-Up and Stretching, Skills Instruction, Competition Experience, and Cool-Down.**
3. The five types of participation offered by Special Olympics floor hockey are **Team Competition, Individual Skills Contest, 10 Meter Puck Dribble, Target Shoot, and Unified.**
4. The athletes who must be screened by their doctor for atlantoaxial instability are players with **Down syndrome.**
5. The first thing a coach should do on arrival at the court is a **safety check of the site and equipment.**
6. Nine pieces of equipment essential for a well-organized training session are **one puck, stick, helmet and set of shin guards per player, marker cones, scrimmage vests, water, clipboard with training plan, first-aid kit, and copies of current medical forms.**
7. Players with low ability may require **physical assistance** as well as verbal instructions.
8. A fun game that can be used to develop stick-handling skills “**Chaser**”.
9. The “Key Words” used to effectively teach shooting are “**Head Up**”, “**Use Spin Move**”, “**Look for the Open Player**”, “**Pass the Puck**”, “**No High Sticking**”, and “**Stay Out of the Crease**”.
10. The “Key Words” used to effectively teach shooting are “**No High Sticking**”, “**Stay Out of the Crease**”, “**Shoot Early**”, “**Aim for the Corner of the Net**”, “**Lift the Puck**”, and **Look for the Rebound.**
11. The best way to teach the game to a beginner player is through the use of **mini-floor** hockey, rather than full scrimmages.
12. The positions on a floor hockey team are **Goalkeeper, Defender (2), \_Right Wing/Forward, Left Wing/Forward, and Center.**
13. After a violation two players put the puck back into play with a **faceoff.**
14. For safety, all athletes are required to wear **shin guards and helmets with cage masks.**
15. Be encouraging from the sidelines, but do not coach a player who **has the puck.**

