



National Prep Schools' Hockey Conference

**Thursday 16 October
at Headington Rye School, Oxfordshire**

DIGITAL RESOURCE PACK



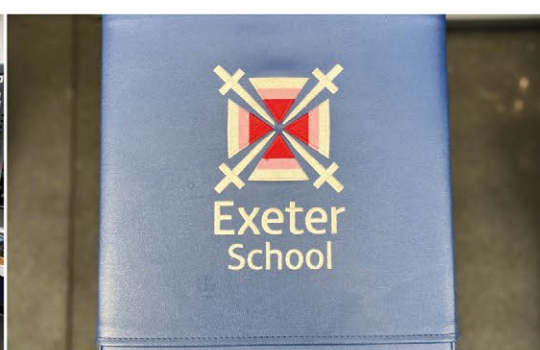
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“

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David Gibson, Director of Sport, Exeter School



Exeter School



SW7 Academy



Cranford School



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select,

go!!!!

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Session One

David Ames OLY

National Prep School Hockey Conference 2025





Welcome!

Welcoming

Admin side of things / Outline of the session

Connections with the group / What would you like to get out of this?

Tomayto / Tomato / Potato / Potahto...

Ask Questions!

Challenge Me / Give me your ways of ways thinking / coaching

David Ames



3 x Olympian
Former GB & ENG Captain
Boys Development Lead at Old Georgians HC
Wales Senior Men Assistant Coach

Format for the Session

Practice Session One

- Developing Core Skills
- 1 v 1 Elimination Skills
- Passing - Receiving both forehand and reverse stick side
- Dribbling Skills and Drills
- Free Hits & Long Corners
- What else would you like to understand / learn / asking questions about?



My Ways (Rightly or Wrongly)

Practice Session One

- Firstly, I'm not the complete deal. I don't claim to know everything. Far from it. But I have my ways.
- I'm heavily invested in technical work for our junior players
- I believe we have a lack of consistent technical development in our junior players across all age groups / even seniors at school / club and international level.
- 'Reps' and producing the fundamental 'basics' in our game are the key to developing players that will make international junior programmes better.
- Whilst I have certain agreements on the ENG Hockey System with how they want to develop our juniors, I do feel we are falling way behind other nations based on our lack of technical focus and what seems to be a more 'play games'
- DO you agree? Let me know your thoughts.

Developing Core Skills

Practice Session One

- Quality of First Touch
- Stick Position and Ball Placement
- Standing 'Taller' with the ball
- Ability to pass off both feet
- Hitting Techniques
- Use of 'Grips'
- Eyes
- 360 awareness



1 v 1 Elimination Skills

Practice Session One

- Techniques and skill sets used to eliminate
- Fakes and ball carrying position
- 3D skills
- Using the space
- Eyes up = A less comfortable defender



Passing / Receiving Forehand & Backhand

Practice Session One

- Off the L & R Foot Passing / Body position
- Passing in flow v static positions / Passing with 'love'
- Use of 'both' hands in passing
- Huge importance on the first touch in receiving
- Receiving in flow / across the body
- Some backhand receiving problems juniors may struggle with



Free Hits & Long Corners

Practice Session One

- Importance of the self pass delivery (especially off the right foot)
- Connections inside the circle (creating more space inside the circle)
- Playing away from the spare defender as often as possible
- Practising delivery types (Slap / slider / hit / lifted push pass / deflections)



Any Questions?



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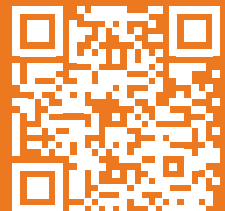
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Session Two
Susannah Townsend MBE

Theme

Transition, Team Problem-Solving & Core Skill Execution

Session Objectives

- 1 Learn quickly – adapt to changing situations and apply feedback immediately**
- 2 Understand transition – recognise when to attack, defend, or reorganise**
- 3 Work as a team – communicate, support, and connect under pressure**
- 4 Solve as a team – identify problems collectively and find in-game solutions**
- 5 Develop individual core skills – control, passing, tackling, and shooting underfatigue**

Session Outline

1 Dynamic Warm-Up & Possession Activation

- Mobility, agility, fun off ball and no stick movement
- Small possession rondo to promote scanning, quick decision-making, and communication
- Discussion focus: *What helps us “see the next play” before receiving?*
How are we brave with our body possession here?

2 Zonal Possession Game

- Divide pitch into 5 zones
- Objective: *Progress the ball through each zone with someone leading into the zone to receive the ball – the player must arrive when the ball arrives*
 - Focus:
 - Movement and awareness of where the space is
 - Thinking one step ahead – anticipating transition
 - Communication and awareness
- Discussion: *How did we help the ball carrier? What options did we create as a team? How do we identify where the space is?*

3 Penalty Corners

- Demonstrate attacking and defensive setups, body language, and clearcommunication in the huddle
 - Explore multiple options
 - Introduce pressure: *Timed or point-scored repetitions*
- Discussion: *What does “good” look like under set-piece pressure?*

4 Self-Pass & Free Hit Transition Drills

- Quick restarts into small overloads (3v2 / 4v3). Umpire to blow the whistle to create quick decisions here. *CREATE CHAOS!!*
- Emphasise movement off the ball, space recognition, and reacting as a unit
 - Reinforce speed and decision-making immediately after turnovers
 - Discussion: *How can we transition faster? What does this look like from players on and off the ball?*

5 Shooting Drills

1 Top circle finishing

2 Shot choices

3 Rebounds and second-phase finishes

- Focus on composure, body position, and timing inside the D, layers and movement
 - Discussion: *How does our body language affect success in front of goal?*

6 Game Play – 7v7

- Full-tempo game on $\frac{3}{4}$ pitch with and without goalkeepers
- Conditions: *Limited touches, quick restarts, or bonus points for transition goals*
- Emphasise pressing high, calm decision-making, and connected transitions
 - Discussion focus:
 - How do we organise as a team during transition moments?
 - What communication or leadership moments stood out?
 - How did we “solve” challenges collectively?
 - How do we adapt to constraints from umpires, coaches, moments in the game?

7 Reflection

- Quick group reflection:
 - What did we learn or adapt quickly today?
 - How did we demonstrate teamwork and problem-solving?
 - Which individual skills improved or got worse under fatigue?

8 Coaching Emphasis

- Learn fast, fail fast, recover faster
- Team-first mindset: *Support, communicate, adapt*
- Transitions win games: *Recognise cues early and respond together*
- Individual quality matters: *Execute core skills under fatigue and pressure*



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