



## **BOXING CANADA**

### **APPRENTICE COACH CONTEXT**

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

(Version 1.4 – June 20, 2016)



# **BOXING CANADA – APPRENTICE COACH**

## **Reference Material**

### **National Coaching Certification Program**

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- Alain Marion, contractor

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## FOREWORD

This technical manual focuses on the fundamentals of Boxing. It has purposely been designed to present information in a particular sequence, in order to be used effectively as a “companion” to the workbook used in the Apprentice Coach workshop.

First, general information about the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) and Boxing Canada’s Coach Development System are provided. The purpose of this information is to familiarize new coaches with the organizational and systemic aspects of coaching.

In Chapter 1, the focus is on the “WHATs” of Boxing. Indeed, understanding the fundamental nature of the sport and being familiar with its various demands are both important prerequisites in order to be an effective Apprentice Coach.

From the “WHAT”, the manual then progresses to the “WHAT – WHEN”, and outlines which specific aspects of the sport and which athletic abilities should be emphasized at various stages of the boxer’s long-term development. This will be the focus of Chapter 2. For many, the information contained in Chapter 2 will be new, or at least different from what they have experienced as young athletes joining a Boxing Club, or from the programs currently offered in many Clubs. Coaches should keep in mind that the guidelines presented in Chapter 2 are the product of a comprehensive reflection that has occurred within Boxing, and that it is also based on scientific research.

Equipped with these important notions, coaches should have a clear picture of what their programs and activities should focus on, given the age and the type of athletes they work with.

From that point on, the rest of the manual will deal with various aspects of “HOW” to be an effective teacher and leader. Aspects such as safety, equipment, basic group management, pedagogy, progressions in teaching basic skills and tactics, competition rules, and basic support in competition will be covered, consistent with what is expected of an Apprentice Coach in Boxing.

This document contains a lot of information, which cannot all be dealt with during a coach training workshop. It should therefore be consulted regularly and on an “as-needed basis” as a reference.

The authors wish that this manual will be a useful tool to Apprentice Coaches, and to *all* Boxing Coaches for that matter. Comments and suggestions for improving it and making it even more effective are welcome.

The Writing Team



National  
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Certification  
Program

# Program Overview

The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) is a coach training and certification program for all coaches in more than 60 sports. The NCCP is moving towards a competency-based approach where coaches are:

- trained in NCCP outcomes relevant to the participants that they are coaching
- evaluated by demonstrating coaching outcomes to a specified standard

The core competencies of coaching are valuing, interacting, leading, problem-solving, and critical thinking. These competencies will be woven throughout all NCCP training and evaluation activities.

## Who am I coaching?

The new structure of the NCCP is based on the participants' needs, which are identified within streams and contexts.

### Community Sport stream

Initiation CSp-Init  
Ongoing participation CSp-Ong

#### Initiation context

Participants of all ages are encouraged to participate in the sport and introduced to sport basics in a fun, safe, and self-esteem building environment regardless of their ability.

#### Ongoing participation context

Participants of all ages are encouraged to continue participating in the sport for fun, fitness, skill development, and social interaction.

### Competition stream

Introduction Comp-Int  
Development Comp-Dev  
High performance Comp-HP

#### Introduction context

Children and/or adolescents are taught basic sport skills and athletic abilities in a fun and safe environment and are typically prepared for local and/or regional level competitions.

#### Development context

Adolescents and young adults are coached to refine basic sport skills, to develop more advanced skills and tactics, and are generally prepared for performance at provincial and/or national level competitions.

#### High performance context

Young adults are coached to refine advanced skills and tactics and are typically prepared for performance at national and international level competitions.

### Instruction stream

Beginners Inst-Beg  
Intermediate performers Inst-Imd  
Advanced performers Inst-Adv

#### Beginners context

Participants of all ages, with little or no sport experience, are taught basic sport skills.

#### Intermediate performers context

Participants, who already have some experience and proficiency in the sport, are taught to refine basic skills and introduced to more complex techniques.

#### Advanced performers context

Participants who are experienced and already proficient in the sport are taught to refine advanced skills and techniques.

## What do I need to be able to do?

Within each context, coaching outcomes are defined by the National Sport Organizations (NSOs) that clearly outline what you must be able to do in order to meet the needs of participants in that context. Contact your NSO to find out which context is relevant to you and what you need to do to achieve accreditation.

### Coaching Outcomes

- Make Ethical Decisions
- Provide Support to Athletes in Training
- Plan a Practice
- Support the Competitive Experience
- Analyze Performance
- Design a Sport Program
- Manage a Program
- Sport-specific Outcomes (as determined by the sport)

## How do I achieve accreditation?

Coaches can receive three types of accreditation in any of the above contexts:

#### ✓ In Training

Coach needs to be trained in additional outcomes.

#### ✓ Trained

Coach has completed training in designated outcomes.

#### ✓ Certified

Coach has been evaluated in designated outcomes and has acknowledged the NCCP Code of Conduct.

### For more information go to [www.coach.ca](http://www.coach.ca)

The National Coaching Certification Program is a collaborative program of the Government of Canada, provincial/territorial governments, national/provincial/territorial sport organizations, and the Coaching Association of Canada.



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## Boxing Canada’s Club-Based Coach Development Model

### Introduction

Boxing is a Club-based sport. For this reason, Club Coaches play a critical role in the growth and development of the sport in Canada.

As part of the shift that is currently being operated towards a competency-based approach throughout the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP), Boxing Canada has decided to make significant adjustments to its Coach Development System (CDS) in order to:

- 1- Improve its quality, and make it more accountable to Boxing Canada’s membership and to the general public.
- 2- Make it more accessible to interested candidates.
- 3- Identify clearly what people must be able to do in order to obtain a particular designation.

Many of these changes concern directly how Club Coaches will be trained and certified in the future.

### The new Coach Development System (CDS) in Boxing

Some of the key principles and features of the new CDS in Boxing include the recognition that:

- There exist different types of Coaches in the Boxing system, and what is expected of each type of Coach must be clearly outlined.
- *Coach Training* and *Coach Certification* are two distinct processes.
- *Coach Certification* must be based on the person’s *demonstrated ability to do* certain things considered important. These “important things” make up the *certification requirements*.
- *Certification requirements* may vary according to (1) the type of coach, (2) the characteristics of the athletes and programs the coach is involved in, and (3) the actual role and responsibilities of the coach in these programs.
- Generally speaking, certification is *not* about defining the “perfect coach”. Rather, it represents the formal acknowledgement that a person can perform to a particular standard. Some form of *evaluation* is therefore required in order for a Coach to become certified.

- *Coach Training* is the process that prepares candidates to meet the various certification requirements. Coach training can take many forms, such as Boxing-specific workshops, multi-sport workshops, individual studies, online education, etc.
- Depending on the person’s background and experience, Coach training needs may vary. While some individuals may not need to go through all the training opportunities that are made available, everyone must meet the certification requirements in place to become certified.
- In most cases, a *progressive approach* is necessary for Coaches to develop and to acquire the necessary skills, competences, and experience that are necessary to provide effective support to athletes in training and in competition. The role and the responsibilities of a developing coach should therefore evolve gradually within a Club.
- Mentoring is a highly effective means of complementing the more formal coach training and education approaches; for this reason, Clubs should offer mentoring opportunities to developing coaches.
- Certification should not be “granted for life”. Once a Coach is certified, he or she should continue to learn and to develop. For instance, coaches may demonstrate that they remain current by being involved in recognized professional development activities.

### **Pathway for developing and certifying Club Coaches**

Given the points outlined in the previous section, Boxing Canada has identified the following pathway for developing Club Coaches:

- A person who wishes to become a Club Coach will initially be considered an *Apprentice*.
- *Apprentice Coaches* will work under a certified Club Coach, who will play the role of a mentor. They will also attend formal coach training workshops, in order to be exposed to a variety of notions that support effective coaching. Those include: (1) Boxing Canada’s Apprentice Coach Workshop and (2) the NCCP Competition-Introduction multiport workshop Part A which, among other things, deals with effective practice planning and ethical decision-making.
- Upon attending *one* of these formal coach training workshops, the candidate will be considered as a “Boxing Apprentice Coach in Training” in the NCCP database.
- When the candidate has attended *both* training workshops, he or she will be considered as a “Trained Boxing Apprentice Coach” in the NCCP database.
- “Trained Boxing Apprentice Coaches” will have two options:
  - to complete the three evaluation requirements in place for “Apprentice Coaches” and become “certified” (see table on the following page); and/or
  - to complete the online NCCP *Make Ethical Decisions* evaluation, and continue their training by entering the “Club Coach” program.

- Upon successful completion of the evaluation requirements listed in the table below, the candidate will be considered as a “Certified Boxing Apprentice Coach” in the NCCP database.

Apprentice Coaches	EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS	CRITERIA (What will be evaluated)	EVALUATION METHODS
	†		
	<b>* Make Ethical Decisions (MED)</b>	Apply correctly the NCCP ethical decision-making process.	Online analysis of an ethical scenario using the NCCP MED process.
	<b>Analyze Performance (Basic Skills)</b>	Detect errors made by athletes who are performing basic Boxing skills.	Video analysis of Boxing skills. A DVD featuring all the skills dealt with during the NCCP Apprentice Coach workshop. For each skill, a variety of segments will be provided, ranging from “perfectly executed” to “needing major improvements”. As part of the evaluation, each candidate will be randomly assigned three (3) segments of “skills needing technical corrections”. He or she will be required to complete and submit a written or audio performance analysis of these videotape segments, accompanied by a series of technical corrective measures, consistent with Boxing Canada’s skill analysis model and technical guidelines.
		Correct such errors, consistent with Boxing Canada’s skill development model.	
	<b>Provide Support to Athletes In Training</b>	Ensures that the practice environment is safe.	Submissions of two (2) videos showing the Candidate coaching in his or her Club environment. The focus of each video will be assigned to the candidate from a list of pre-determined themes. Videos must meet the guidelines developed by Boxing Canada relative to format as well as to image and sound quality in order to be acceptable. A debriefing discussion over the phone between the candidate and the evaluator follows the formal observation.
		Implements an appropriately structured and organized practice / training session.	
		Makes interventions that promote learning during the practice / training session.	

† All three evaluation requirements must also be completed by candidates who wish to be certified as Club Coaches

\* Mandatory to enter the *Club Coach* program

- While working at Club level with their mentor, *Trained* or *Certified* Apprentice Coaches who wish to become “*Club Coaches*” will continue their training and preparation, in order to be adequately prepared to successfully complete *all* the evaluation requirements that Boxing Canada has identified for the *Club Coach* context.

- The following workshops will be made available to *Trained* or *Certified Apprentice Coaches* : (1) Boxing Canada’s Club Coach workshop; and (2) NCCP Competition-Introduction multiport workshop Part B, which deals with effective teaching, mental preparation, and program design.
- Upon attending *one* of the above formal coach training workshops, the candidate will keep his or her designation as a *Trained* or *Certified* Apprentice Coach, and will also be recognized as a “*Boxing Club Coach - In Training*” in the NCCP database.
- When the candidate has attended *all four* training workshops available for Apprentice and Club Coaches, he or she will be considered as a “*Trained Boxing Club Coach*” in the NCCP database. If the coach is also certified as an Apprentice Coach, this recognition will also appear in his or her NCCP database record.
- To become a “Certified Boxing Club Coach”, a candidate will have to successfully complete *all* the evaluation requirements applicable, i.e. (1) the three that apply to Apprentice Coaches (see previous table); and (2) the three additional requirements that apply to Club Coaches only (see table next page).

*Note: The process outlined in this section should apply to the vast majority of individuals who wish to become certified coaches. However, in each system, exceptional circumstances sometimes arise; provisions are in place for those instances to be dealt with on case by case basis by Boxing Canada and its provincial/territorial partners.*

		<b>EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>CRITERIA (What will be evaluated)</b>	<b>EVALUATION METHODS</b>
<b>Club Coaches</b>	<b>Support to Boxer in preparation for a fight</b>		Conduct a general assessment of a boxer and determine readiness for competition.	Using the template provided by Boxing Canada (Silver or Gold levels), the coach provides an assessment of a Club-level Boxer in the areas of skills, tactics, and readiness for a competition. The coach also provides a video of the boxer performing the various assessment activities to the Evaluator.
			Develop a competition plan	Based on this assessment, the coach uses the template provided by Boxing Canada, and outlines a competition plan for the boxer in order to ensure the first competitive experience is as positive as possible.
	<b>Analyze Performance (Intermediate Boxing Skills &amp; Tactics)</b>		Detect technical errors made by athletes who are performing intermediate-level Boxing skills.	Video analysis of intermediate Boxing skills and tactics using an evaluation DVD provided by Boxing Canada (see description of method in the table that shows the evaluation requirements for Apprentice Coach).  OR Onsite evaluation in the candidate's gym, if feasible.
			Detect tactical errors made by athletes in Club-level training or competitive situations.	
			Correct such errors, consistent with Boxing Canada's skill development model, ringcraft principles, and pedagogical approaches	
	<b>Plan a Practice</b>		Identify appropriate logistics for a practice/training session.	Coach submits a detailed practice plan and an Emergency Action Plan that will be marked as part of a portfolio.
			Identify appropriate activities for each part of the practice/training session.	
			Design an Emergency Action Plan.	

The table on the following page presents a summary of the training and certification steps and requirements for Boxing Canada's Apprentice and Club Coaches.

## Steps in the Process of Becoming a *Certified Coach*, and Corresponding Designations in the NCCP Database

Coach Training	Boxing Terminology Showing in NCCP database following attendance to specific training workshops	Evaluation requirements for Certification Purposes	Boxing Terminology Showing in the NCCP database upon successful completion of the specified evaluation requirement(s)
<b>1- Boxing specific -</b> Apprentice Coach Workshop *	Apprentice Coach - <i>In Training</i>	Three (3) requirements.  See the <i>Apprentice Coach</i> evaluation requirements table for details.	<b>Apprentice Coach - Certified</b>
<b>2- Multisport –</b> Competition Introduction Part A *	Apprentice Coach - <i>Trained</i>		
<b>3- Boxing specific –</b> Club Coach Workshop †	Club Coach – <i>In Training</i>	Six (6) evaluation requirements: the three that apply to <i>Apprentice Coaches</i> , plus three additional ones that apply only to <i>Club Coaches</i> .  See the <i>Apprentice Coach</i> and the <i>Club Coach</i> evaluation requirements tables for details.	<b>Club Coach - Certified</b>
<b>4- Multisport –</b> Competition Introduction Part B †	Club Coach – <i>Trained</i>		

\* and † : With the exception of the Boxing-specific workshops (the Apprentice Coach workshop is a pre-requisite to the Club Coach workshop), the order in which training occurs is not important. It is the attendance to all the identified workshops that determines the coach’s status as “Trained”.

To be considered “Club Coach – Trained”, the candidate must attend all four (4) coach training workshops listed in the above table.

A coach can have more than one “status/designation” in the NCCP database, e.g.: Apprentice Coach Trained AND Club Coach in Training; or Apprentice Coach Certified AND Club Coach Trained, etc.

The evaluation requirements successfully completed by an Apprentice Coach are also recognized in the Club Coach certification process.

To be certified as a Club Coach, *all* the evaluation requirements identified by Boxing Canada must be completed successfully (i.e. the three that apply to both Apprentice and Club Coaches, and the three that apply to Club Coaches only).

## **Professional Development**

As mentioned previously, NCCP certification in Boxing should not be “granted for life”. Once a Coach is certified, he or she will be required to continue to learn and to develop in order to maintain his or her certification status.

To support the vision Boxing Canada has outlined for its Coaching Development System, it will be particularly important that certified club coaches engage actively and regularly into recognized professional development (PD) activities. In particular, they should seek to improve specific skills that will enable them to contribute effectively in the process of developing qualified human resources in the Boxing system.

In the future, Boxing Canada will therefore develop and offer a variety of PD opportunities in the following areas:

- Mentoring
- Leadership
- Management and development of human resources
- Coaching female boxers

In cooperation with other NCCP partners, Boxing Canada will also offer PD opportunities in more technically oriented domains such as:

- Specific strategies and methods to support long-term athlete development
- Coaching female athletes in general
- Coaching effectiveness
- Theory and methodology of training
- Designing advanced sport programs
- Mental preparation and performance
- Nutrition
- Recovery and regeneration techniques
- The effects of environmental factors on sport performance
- Etc.

## **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF AN APPRENTICE COACH?**

An Apprentice Coach, upon satisfactorily completing his/her training, should be able to teach and demonstrate the fundamental skills of Boxing to club athletes and to recreational groups of varied ages and ability levels. The focus of this workshop is therefore on the basic techniques and tactical principles that every beginner boxer should learn and master.

An Apprentice Coach is also expected to:

- Know and apply the safety factors that must be in place when coaching a demanding combat sport to both youngsters and adults.
- Apply a sound coaching philosophy, be a good role model for the participant, behave ethically, and make ethical decisions.
- Master basic teaching and intervention skills.
- Conduct and manage a variety of group activities at Club level.

Because Apprentice Coaches may also have to assist boxers in the early stages of their competitive career, this workshop is also designed to cover such areas as the key rules of amateur boxing, fundamental ringcraft principles, the use of gym equipment, and basic methods for improving motor abilities that support Boxing skills.

All the above is expected to be done in a manner that is in harmony with the principles of ethical coaching, and consistent with the key guidelines of Boxing Canada's long term athlete development (LTAD) model.



## CHAPTER 1 – THE DEMANDS OF BOXING

The purpose of this chapter is to help coaches:

- Understand the fundamental nature of the sport of Boxing.
- Use a common terminology with regards to the various athletic abilities that support performance in sport.
- Appreciate the multifaceted demands of Boxing.
- Recognize the importance of the specific physical and motor athletic abilities that are required to perform in Boxing.

### 1.1- The Fundamental Nature of Boxing

Boxing is a combat-duel sport. This means it is a one-on-one confrontation arranged and conducted according to specific rules.

The primary goal in Boxing is to strike the opponent with the knuckle part of a gloved hand (Picture 1.1) on a given target area (Picture 1.2), without being struck in return.



**Picture 1.1-** Hitting area of the boxing glove



**Picture 1.2-** Target area in boxing

During a competition, boxers are matched according to *body weight* and *skill level*. They perform in a confined area (the ring), and move around executing various offensive (attacking) and defensive manoeuvres, trying to defeat each other by scoring points for well-placed blows.

In Boxing, attack and defence often occur almost simultaneously. The efforts produced by the athletes are intermittent (i.e., a pause follows each engagement), and their intensity is generally high.

The number of engagements and their duration is governed by the rules, and is therefore subject to change. At the time of producing this manual (2010), the number of engagements in amateur boxing is as follows:

- **Women:** 4 rounds of 2 minutes each, with a 1-minute break between rounds.
- **Men:** 3 rounds of 3 minutes each, with a 1-minute break between rounds.

The training done by the boxers must prepare them to:

- develop a variety of offensive and defensive skills
- achieve an optimal level of fitness and physical condition
- remain under complete control of their emotions during a match
- analyze and study the opposition for intentions or weaknesses, and regulate their actions accordingly, through quick and efficient decision-making
- produce learned responses very quickly to particular stimuli or cues by the opponent

The section that follows outlines the athletic abilities needed by boxers to meet the demands of their sport.

## **1.2- Athletic Abilities and Their Importance in Boxing**

When the boxer executes specific skills, or when he or she is involved in a competition, performance is supported by a variety of factors or *athletic abilities*. The term *athletic ability* refers to the aptitude a person has to carry out certain types of efforts, movements, or tasks that support performance in sport. Athletic abilities can be grouped into four general categories: Physical, Motor, Tactical, and Mental.

Table 1.1 presents a brief description of the *physical* and *motor* athletic abilities.

Table 1.2 provides examples outlining their importance in Boxing.

**Table 1.1** – Definitions and Key Points about the Athletic Abilities.

Category	Athletic Abilities: Definitions and Key Points
<p><b>Physical</b> abilities are determined by the rate at which energy and force can be produced by the muscles, and by the range at which the movements can be executed.</p>	<p><b>Maximum speed:</b> The highest rate at which a movement or a series of movements can be executed, or the ability to cover a given distance in the shortest possible time during an all-out effort of very short duration (<i>8 seconds or less</i>).</p> <p><b>Speed-endurance:</b> The ability to sustain efforts at near maximum speed for as long as possible (<i>normally, very intense efforts lasting between 8 and 60 seconds</i>).</p> <p><b>Aerobic stamina:</b> The ability to sustain a dynamic effort over an extended period of time (<i>normally, efforts lasting several minutes, or even hours</i>). <b>Note:</b> <i>Intense efforts lasting between 2 and 10 minutes require a subset of this athletic ability referred-to as “maximum aerobic power”.</i></p> <p><b>Maximum strength:</b> The highest level of tension generated by a muscle or muscle group during a maximum contraction, regardless of the duration of the contraction.</p> <p><b>Speed-strength:</b> The ability to perform a muscle contraction or overcome a resistance as fast as possible (<i>normally, very brief efforts of 1 or 2 seconds</i>).</p> <p><b>Strength-endurance:</b> The ability to perform repeated muscle contractions at intensities below maximum strength (<i>normally, 15 to 30 repetitions, or more</i>).</p> <p><b>Flexibility:</b> The ability to perform movements of large amplitude about a joint without sustaining injury.</p>
<p><b>Motor</b> abilities support the controlled execution of movements.</p>	<p><b>Coordination:</b> The ability to perform movements in the correct order and with the right timing.</p> <p><b>Balance:</b> The ability to achieve and maintain stability. There are two types of balance relevant in Boxing: (1) <b>static balance:</b> adopting a controlled body position in a stable environment (2) <b>dynamic balance:</b> maintaining control during movement, and/or stabilizing the body by performing muscular contractions to offset the effect of an external force.</p> <p><b>Agility:</b> The ability to execute movements or to move rapidly, with precision, and with ease.</p>
<p><b>Tactical</b> abilities support effective decisions</p>	<p>The ability to analyse a situation and produce a correct response, i.e. one that gives a competitive advantage and/or increases the probability of a good performance.</p>
<p><b>Mental</b> abilities enable the athlete to be in the proper state of mind to perform successfully.</p>	<p><b>Goal setting:</b> The ability to identify clear goals and priorities that will guide future actions and decisions.</p> <p><b>Concentration:</b> The ability to pay attention to what is important in a given situation, and avoid negative influences or distractions.</p> <p><b>Emotional Control:</b> The ability to consciously maintain a high level of control over one’s feelings when in stressful conditions.</p>

**Note:** In this document, the focus will be on *basic boxing skills* as well as on the *motor* and *tactical* athletic abilities that support performance. Methods for developing the *physical* and *mental athletic abilities* will be dealt with in the NCCP multisport modules and in Boxing Canada’s *Club Coach* reference manual.

**Table 1.2** - Overview of the physical and motor athletic abilities required to perform in Boxing, and of their importance.

Importance in Boxing  ↳	Physical Abilities							Motor Abilities	
	Speed	Speed- Endurance	Aerobic Stamina	Maximum Strength	Speed- Strength	Strength- Endurance	Flexibility	Coordination	Balance
	High	Moderate	Moderate to high	Moderate (relative to body weight)	Very high	Very High	Moderate to High	Very high	Very High
<p><b>Examples of Boxing situations requiring this athletic ability...</b></p>	<p>Boxers do not sprint or move their body very quickly between two points, like in many other sports. However, they must execute a variety of fast movements, and speed supports performance in moves such as: footwork, blocks, parries, punches, combinations, etc.</p>	<p>Speed-endurance allows the boxer to (1) sustain the production of efforts at very high intensity lasting 10 seconds or more during certain phases of a fight; (2) execute many repetitions of certain movements throughout a fight, without a marked decrease in their speed (i.e. punches; jabs; etc.).</p>	<p>Aerobic power and endurance help the boxer accomplish high volumes of training, sustain a high level of intensity throughout a fight, and recover more quickly from training and competition.</p>	<p>Strength is required is the hands, arms, shoulders, torso, core, and legs. Along with speed, strength is necessary to generate powerful punches. An adequate level of muscular strength also contributes to protecting the boxer's body and articulations against injuries that could result from the opponent's blows.</p>	<p>Speed strength allows the gloved hand to be accelerated very quickly when performing a punch, a jab, a block, etc.</p>	<p>Strength - endurance allows the boxer to execute many repetitions of certain movements throughout a fight, without a marked decrease in the amount of muscular tension that can be generated each time (i.e. punches; jabs; etc.).</p>	<p>Flexibility allows the boxer to perform each offensive or defensive movement with the required amplitude. It also helps to protect specific body parts against injuries such as muscle tears that can occur while performing very quick movements, or during misses.</p>	<p>Coordination is a critical motor ability in boxing, and it supports nearly every boxing skill, because an appropriate position and sequence are almost always required. It comes into play in actions such as the pivot, the punch, footwork, combination moves, parries, etc.</p>	<p>The success of nearly all boxing skills depends upon the stability of the boxer's stance. If a boxer loses balance even momentarily, he/she is in no position to attack or defend, and becomes extremely vulnerable.</p>

Picture 1.3 below illustrates many of the athletic abilities that are involved in Boxing:

- Skill
- Balance
- Coordination
- Reaction and decision-making
- Speed of movement
- Power (speed-strength)
- Flexibility
- Concentration and focus



**Picture 1.3-** Two boxers in action during a match.

### **1.3- Boxing... as Described by a Boxer**

*By Daniel Trépanier*

Boxing is one of the most exciting sports, and there are many reasons for this. First, the skills learned by the boxer must always be used very quickly. In many sports, there is some delay between attack and defence; however, in boxing, attack and defence are almost occurring simultaneously. All the action is almost instantaneous: there is only a fraction of a second between the start of a punch and its impact (or miss). In the split second in which the boxer must select his/her course of action, his/her learned response to a particular stimulus takes over. His/her neuromuscular system, developed through carefully planned skill practices, is put to the test. The fully trained, mature boxer has a multitude of defensive options to turn to, and numerous counters and combination counters to select from. Indeed, nearly every move has a counter, and the number of moves and counters at a boxer's disposal largely determines his/her effectiveness in the ring. It is estimated that there are more than fifteen hundred manoeuvres in boxing. This emphasizes the scope of the coach's task, and the complexity of selecting the moves that are best suited to each individual's physical and psychological capabilities.

All possible moves in the ring must be practiced countless times until they become habitual and conditioned responses with which the boxer reacts instantly to a particular stimulus. Researchers have emphasized the value of practicing technical and tactical skills to such a degree that even seasoned international boxers continue to work on refining their range of skills. Developing learned responses to given stimuli frees the areas of the brain concerned with tactical awareness, and makes it possible to select very quickly the optimal response that will enable the boxer to take advantage over his or her opponent.

It is clear that there is a specific "ring intelligence" that enables the good boxer to study the opposition for intentions or weaknesses, and regulate his or her next action accordingly. Out of hundreds of possible choices, the boxer can select only one, and it must be right option.

The skilful boxer must also possess a high degree of spatial awareness. He or she must gauge the speed of an opponent's punch in relation to his or her own body position, and plan for a suitable counterattack. In boxing, it is therefore critical that the athlete be capable of interpreting correctly his or her own speed and reaction times, as this is necessary to determine if it is more advantageous to strike the opponent or to adjust the defence. Interpretation means judgment, and judgment implies intelligence. Judgment in boxing is always at a premium, and must always be exercised quickly, accurately and constantly. Misjudgment often brings instant and severe penalty.

Modern amateur boxing is a disciplined form of physical combat where emotions must remain under complete control. Anger is a natural impulse in the heat of battle. However, it must be controlled in boxing, because it impairs judgment and the ability to act or think quickly. Boxing can teach an athlete to act with calm deliberation, and to think and act under pressure.

Lastly, it must be emphasized that the boxer must learn to accept the elation of success and the pangs of defeat with good grace. The ability to face victory or defeat in a proper manner reflects both the effectiveness of the coaches' influence and the class of their general philosophy.



## CHAPTER 2 – LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT IN BOXING

The purpose of this chapter is to help coaches:

- Appreciate the importance of taking a long-term approach in developing young boxers.
- Understand how growth and maturation should impact the training of specific athletic abilities.
- Become familiar with the key stages of Boxing Canada's LTAD model.
- Realize what the focus of training should be at specific stages of the boxer's development.

### 2.1 – What is Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD)?

Given the fundamental nature and the demands of the sport of Boxing, a logical and well-planned path is required to develop a healthy, balanced, and successful boxer who will enjoy the sport, and wish to remain involved over many years.

Long Term Athletes Development (LTAD) is a model outlining the specific training and competitive activities that are deemed the most effective in developing a successful athlete over several years. The model is based on a seven stage progression, with each stage having a specific relationship to the important biological, psychological and social development periods in a person's life. A fundamental principle behind the LTAD model is that *sport programs and activities must be tailored to the rate at which children grow and mature.*

The key points pertaining to each LTAD stage in Boxing are outlined in table 2.1. Other important aspects of the LTAD model relate to the:

- 1- Specific times in the life of the developing athlete when it is most effective to work on specific athletic abilities such as coordination, balance, agility, skills, speed, endurance, strength, etc.
- 2- Major differences that exist between boys and girls regarding the developmental process, and the implications this has on training.
- 3- Types of training and competitive activities that should be part of the athlete's program throughout his or her developmental process.

**Table 2.1** – Overview of the LTAD Stages in Boxing.

<b>LTAD Stages</b>	<b>Key Points</b>
<p><b>STAGE 1 – Active Start</b></p> <p><b>Boys and girls, 0 to 6 years old</b></p>	<p>Parents should ensure that their child has frequent opportunities to be physically active. The emphasis must always be on fun and on mastering new movements and skills. Although Boxing is not an activity children will be involved in at this stage of their development, it is important that our sport support the groups and organizations that promote physical activity in young children.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 2 - FUNDamentals</b></p> <p><b>Boys: 6 to 9</b> <b>Girls: 6 to 8</b></p>	<p>This stage is important for general athletic development. The focus must be on fundamental motor skills (agility, balance, coordination, quickness) as well as on developing basic sport skills (running, throwing, catching, gliding, and swimming) that can later be transferred to a variety of activities. Exposing the child to a wide range of sports, as well as ensuring he or she experiences success and enjoyment throughout these activities, are critical.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 3 – Learn to Box</b></p> <p><b>Boys: 9 to 12</b> <b>Girls: 8 to 11</b></p>	<p>In boys, this is usually the youngest age group involved in organized Boxing programmes. The emphasis should be on developing basic Boxing skills. Specialization must be avoided at this stage, and participants must be encouraged to get involved in a variety of sports to carry on with their general physical and motor development.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 4 – Train to Box</b></p> <p><b>Boys: 12 to 16 or less</b> <b>Girls: 11 to 15 or less</b></p>	<p>At this stage, the focus must be on introducing the participants to the various aspects of physical preparation for Boxing and on developing Boxing-specific skills. Increasingly challenging yet carefully selected competitive experiences must also be provided to the young athletes. The volume and the intensity of training should be increased progressively throughout this period, and it is the ideal time to instil a passion for the sport. For many athletes, this will also be the time when the growth spurt of the adolescence occurs. Some girls of this age group may show an interest towards Boxing. Talent identification and some form of specialization may be done at this stage.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 5 – Train to Compete</b></p> <p><b>Boys and young men: 16 to ≈ 21</b> <b>Girls and young women: 15 to ≈ 22</b></p>	<p>At this stage, the focus must be on optimizing physical preparation and Boxing-specific skills, while at the same time developing the competitive attitude and the mental skills that are required to perform at a higher level. For the athletes who have the necessary training background, training becomes highly specialized in order to support a progression towards the high-performance level. The volume and the intensity of training are high, and fluctuate according to the schedule and the importance of the matches. For many athletes, significant strength gains can be achieved during the first few years of this stage. The majority of young women who join a Boxing club for the first time belong to this age group.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 6 - Train for Peak Performance</b></p> <p><b>Men and Women ≈ 22 or more</b></p>	<p>At this stage, athletes have reached physical maturity. All the physical, technical, tactical, and psychological performance factors should be developed to an optimal level, highly specific to Boxing. The athletes who have the necessary training background and demonstrate the potential to perform at the highest level begin a transition from the national to the international scene. Career management, as well as the appropriate selection of matches throughout the preparation process, are key factors determining success.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 7 – Active for Life</b></p> <p><b>Male and female participants of all ages</b></p>	<p>At this stage, participants engage in a transition from competitive Boxing to a life-long participation in sport and physical activity, or join a Boxing Club for a variety of reasons (fitness, self-development, etc.). Boxing must retain these individuals within its system through programmes and activities that are rewarding and adapted to both their needs and interests. Experienced boxers may also share their passion for the sport, their knowledge, and their skills with the up and coming generation through coaching, officiating, or as leaders of clubs and Boxing organizations, thus contributing to the growth of the sport.</p>

## 2.2- Why a LTAD Model in Boxing?

LTAD is about offering optimal training, competition and recovery programs and activities throughout an athlete's career, particularly in relation to the important maturation years of young people, in order that the athletes can reach their full potential throughout all stages of their career.

To achieve this goal, it is critical to outline clearly to coaches, parents, administrators and the Boxing community in Canada what a long term approach to training and preparation means, and what should be emphasized at each stage of the boxer's development.

Applying the principles and guidelines of the LTAD model should help Boxing to:

- Address some of the current shortcomings of its development system:
  - too many boxers lacking fundamental athletic abilities
  - specialization occurring too early in many instances
  - too many competitions, too soon in the career of many boxers
  - adult training models superimposed on children and adolescents
  - male boxers training models superimposed on females
  
- Create an *integrated system* that will enable more:
  - opportunities for young people to participate in Boxing
  - boxers retained in the sport
  - boxers achieving their aspirations through a higher standard of performance

## 2.3- LTAD and the Athlete's Growth and Maturation Processes

### Chronological Age and Developmental Age

*Chronological age* refers to the number of years and days elapsed since birth.

*Developmental age*, on the other hand, refers to the individual's degree of physical, mental, cognitive, and emotional maturity. Physical developmental age can be determined by skeletal maturity or bone age after which mental, cognitive, and emotional maturity is then incorporated.

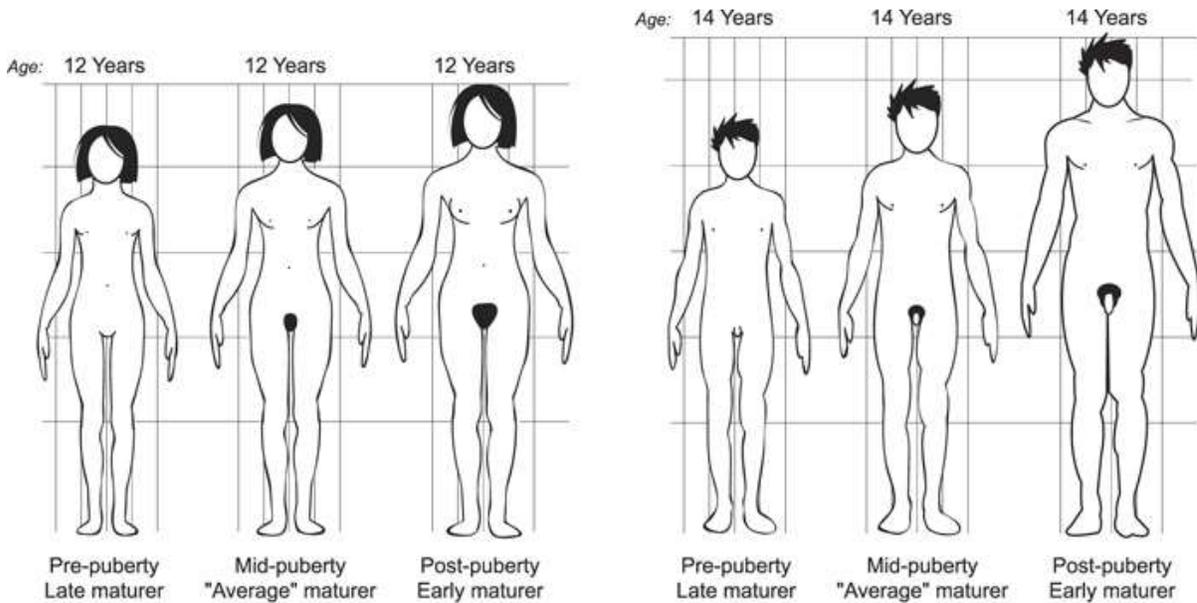
### Children Do Not All Develop and Mature at the Same Rate

A key feature of the LTAD model is the recognition that not all children develop and mature at the same rate. Programs and activities must therefore be developed and adjusted accordingly, particularly during the adolescence, because huge developmental differences may be observed between individuals of the same age groups.

These developmental differences are due, in part, to the fact that some children begin their growth spurt at a young age, while others are late maturers. For instance, at the same chronological age of 14, one athlete could have the developmental status of a twelve-year-old child, while another may display the maturation level of an adolescent of 16, which represents a considerable difference from a physical development point of view.

This concept is illustrated in Figure 2.1. Clearly, training them in the same way is not the most logical thing to do...

**Figure 2.1** – Possible levels of biological maturation in girls and boys of the same chronological age. Large variations can be observed between individuals.



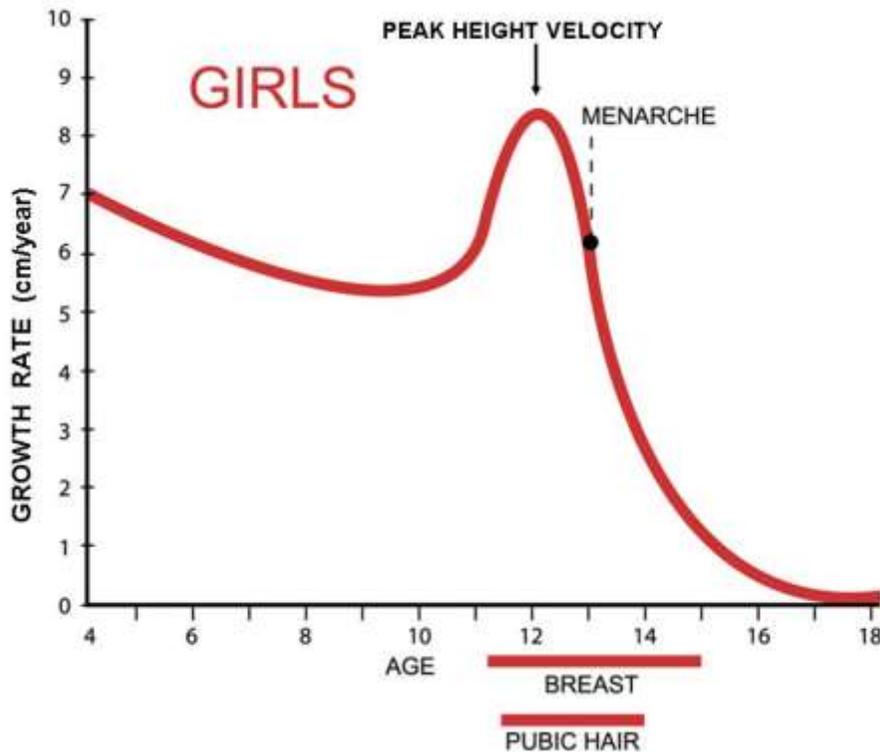
Adapted from "Growing Up" by J.M. Tanner. Scientific American 1973

## Important Growth and Maturation Physiological Events That Impact Training

The key LTAD training recommendations will be outlined in the next section. Coaches must know that these guidelines are based on certain important physiological events that occur as children grow and mature. The key points are:

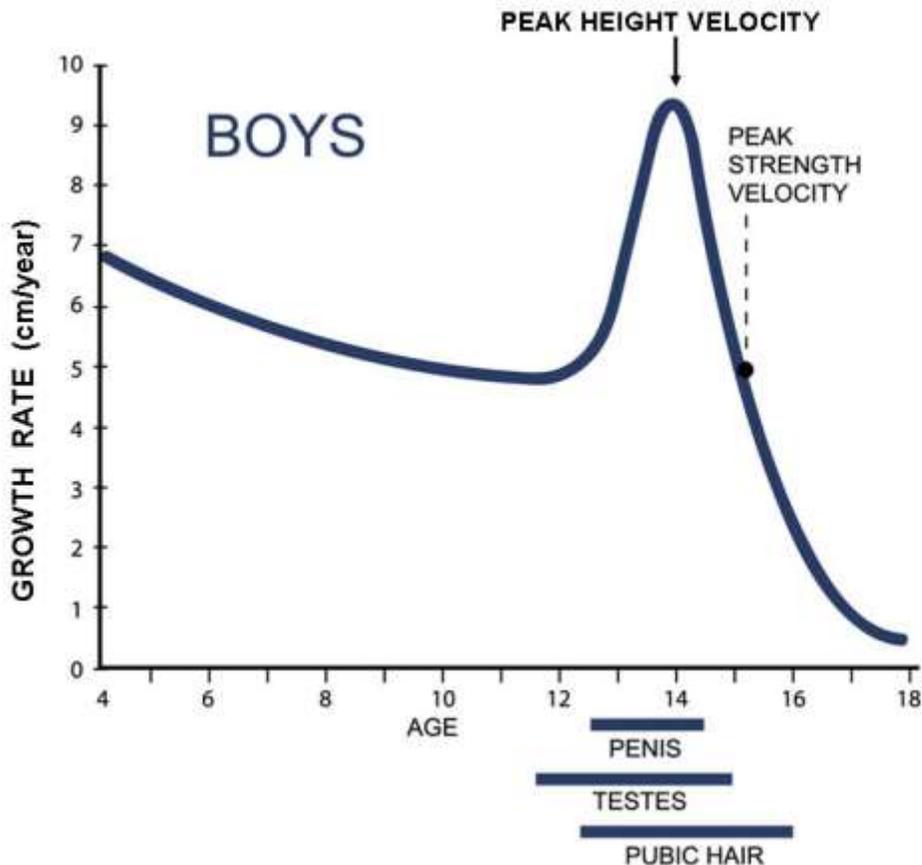
- The two main points of reference for designing adapted sport programmes are:
  - 1- the beginning of the growth spurt during adolescence, and
  - 2- the period when growth rate is maximal (this period is referred-to as *Peak Height Velocity*, or *PHV*); PHV is therefore the maximum rate of increase in stature that is observed during the growth spurt.
- On average, growth spurt occurs at different ages in boys and girls.
- **In girls** - PHV occurs at about 12 years of age (Figure 2.2). Usually, the first physical sign of adolescence is breast budding, which occurs slightly after the onset of the growth spurt. Shortly thereafter, pubic hair begins to grow. Menarche, or the onset of menstruation, comes rather late in the growth spurt, occurring after PHV is achieved. It is important to note that the sequence of developmental events may occur 2 or even more years earlier or later than the average.

**Figure 2.2-** Maturity events in girls (modified after Ross et al., 1977). Ages shown are based on average values, and important variations may exist amongst individuals.



- **In boys** - PHV is more intense than in girls, and occurs on average about 2 years later, i.e. around the age of 14 (Figure 2.3). Growth of the testes, pubic hair, and penis are related to the maturation process. The period when the greatest strength gains take place, or Peak Strength Velocity (PSV), comes a year or so after PHV, i.e. around the age of 15 or even later. Thus, on average, the optimal period for the development of strength occurs later in boys compared to girls. As with girls, the developmental sequence for male athletes may occur 2 or more years earlier or later than the average. Boys who mature early may have as much as a 4-year physiological advantage over their late-maturing peers. Of course, the late maturers will eventually catch up when they experience their growth spurt.

**Figure 2.3-** Maturity events in boys (modified after Ross et al., 1977). Ages shown are based on average values, and important variations may exist amongst individuals.



## 2.4- What to Train and When in Developing Boxers

By and large, apprentice coaches will be working with athletes in the *Fundamentals*, *Learn to Box*, and *Train to Train* stages. These are critical stages for acquiring and developing an excellent basic boxing technique, for refining boxing skills, for developing the physical and motor abilities that are important in boxing, and for providing a positive, fun environment so that the athletes grow to love the sport and want to remain involved on a long-term basis.

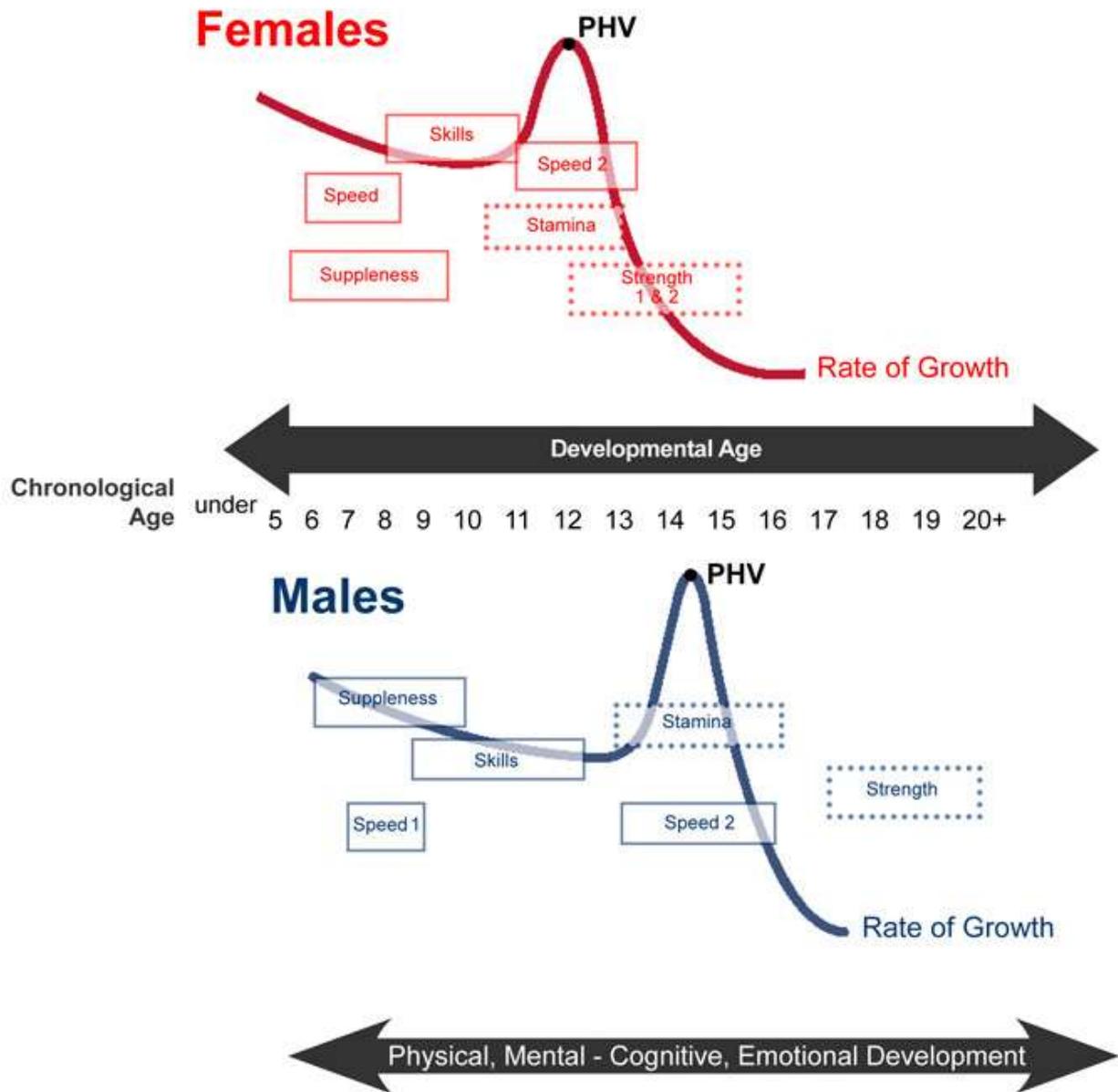
Apprentice coaches may also work with participants who are in the *Active for Life* stage, and who choose boxing as a recreational, personal development, and/or fitness activity.

Figure 2.4 shows the “optimal windows of trainability” for specific athletic abilities in boys and in girls. An “optimal windows of trainability” relates to a precise period in the athlete’s life during which his or her body is particularly receptive to a specific training stimulus, and when the response to training is therefore very good. Key points include:

- Athletic abilities may be trained at any age, and some gains will always be observed as a result of training. However, the magnitude and the rate at which the adaptations and the gains occur are not the same throughout a person’s life. To give athletes all the opportunities they need and deserve to develop their athletic potential fully, certain types of training must be emphasized at certain stages of their development.
- For some athletic abilities such as coordination, agility, and balance, the “optimal windows of trainability” are fairly similar in boys and girls, and chronological age can be used as a point of reference. In both cases, the critical years are early childhood. If the appropriate opportunities are provided, a solid foundation can be established in the area of motor development, which will be critical for athletic success in later stages of development.
- The optimal period for skill development generally occurs between the ages of 8 and 11 in girls, and 9 and 12 in boys.
- Once growth spurt has begun, the critical times for training speed, aerobic stamina, and strength vary between males and females. For these athletic abilities, developmental age, not chronological age, should be the main point of reference when determining if the athlete is ready to begin a highly focused training program.

Tables 2.2 to 2.5 list the training components and skills that should be emphasized during the *Fundamentals*, *Learn to Box*, *Train to Train* and *Active for Life* stages of Boxing’s LTAD model.

**Figure 2.4-** Optimal windows of trainability for specific athletic abilities throughout the developmental process in males and females (Balyi and Way, 2005). Ages shown are based on average values, and some variation may exist amongst individuals. PHV: Peak height velocity.



**All Performance Factors Are Always Trainable!**

## Table 2.2- LTAD Stage - FUNdamentals

Boys: 6 to 9 Girls: 6 to 8

Very few children of this age group actually get involved in Boxing programs. For those who do, the emphasis should be on the development of motor skills in a fun and non-competitive environment, and Boxing should be only one of many sports participants are involved in.

<p><b>Physical aspects</b></p> <p>Fun fitness activities and games to enhance motor skills and speed. General training for aerobic endurance and flexibility can be initiated, as well as muscular strength and endurance using the participant's own body weight.</p>	<p>Well-structured programmes with proper progression are critical. The child should have the opportunity to be involved in a variety of physical activity sessions at least 4 times a week. No significant gender differences are apparent, and physical activity should still be done through games and sport play.</p> <p>Throughout this stage, the focus should be on enhancing basic movement abilities such as agility, balance, speed, and coordination, and on acquiring and improving fundamental sport skills such as running, jumping, throwing, punching, and swimming.</p> <p>The first “window of opportunity” for training speed (accelerated adaptation to training) occurs at the ages of 6-8 in girls and 7-9 in boys.</p>
<p><b>Technical and tactical aspects</b></p> <p>Initiation to some motor skills that will be useful in the sport of Boxing, i.e. coordination between the movements of the arms, hands, and legs; balance; awareness of body position; etc.</p> <p>At all times emphasize and reinforce good movement patterns.</p>	<p><b>Technical</b> – Introduction to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the three fundamental principles of Boxing: offence, defence, footwork</li> <li>• basic body position; basic straight punches; basic block technique against straight punches</li> </ul> <p><b>Tactical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on fun games and exploration of spatial awareness.</li> <li>• Provide children with the opportunity to experience the outcomes of some competitions</li> <li>• Introduce basic rules of Boxing and ethical principles in sport</li> <li>• Introduce basic decision-making abilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Role of the Coach</b></p> <p>Be a positive model at all times, and focus on the process (efforts) as opposed to the outcome (result, or winning).</p>	<p>With participants of this age group, coaches should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote play and spontaneity.</li> <li>• Provide lots of positive reinforcement to build self-esteem in the participants.</li> <li>• Teach young athletes that mistakes or poor performance are not “bad”, and provide learning opportunities.</li> <li>• Introduce Boxing etiquette, rules and concept of fair play.</li> <li>• Model fairplay and ethical behaviours, and encourage open communication</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations pertaining to training and competition</b></p> <p>Participation to a variety of other sports and activities above and beyond Boxing. Focus on training as opposed to competition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation to 4 to 6 sport or general physical activities each week.</li> <li>• If possible, participation to 1 or 2 “introduction to Boxing” sessions of 45 to 75 minutes on a weekly basis.</li> <li>• No formal competitive structure.</li> </ul>

**Table 2.3- LTAD Stage – LEARN TO BOX « Building technique » Boys 9 to 12 Girls 8 to 11**

In boys, this is usually the youngest age group involved in organized Boxing programmes. Very few girls get involved into Boxing at this stage. This stage is one of the most important periods for the development of young athletes because it coincides with the optimal window of trainability for skills.

<p><b>Physical aspects</b></p> <p>Throughout this stage, the emphasis must be on (1) the acquisition of basic skills specific to Boxing, and (2) continuing to refine general motor abilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The emphasis of the training process must be placed on learning Boxing-specific movements. This should contribute to improving the child’s stamina, quickness, and muscular endurance.</li> <li>• The development and refinement of basic motor abilities should be continued (agility, balance, coordination).</li> <li>• Strength training can be initiated, using the athlete’s own body weight as well as equipment such as stability balls and medicine balls. The focus should be on:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General exercises, and some slight emphasis on the development of the shoulders and torso;</li> <li>• Correct lifting techniques with free weights; however, no maximal or near-maximal strength activities should be performed, in order to avoid injuries to the growth plates</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Endurance and speed should be trained through fun games.</li> <li>• Some coach-lead training activities such as simulated bouts, condition sparring, or shadow boxing can be introduced progressively.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Technical and tactical aspects</b></p> <p>Since this stage is main window of opportunity for the acquisition and development of skills. The emphasis must be placed on the following fundamental aspects of Boxing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Offensive actions</li> <li>2. Defensive actions</li> <li>3. Footwork</li> </ol> <p>Athletes should also be progressively exposed to competition.</p>	<p><b>Techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus should be on the same skills as those outlined in the FUNdamental stage, plus the following:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop straight punches</li> <li>- Introduction to hook and uppercut punches</li> <li>- Introduction to straight punches combination</li> <li>- Introduction to straight punches counter punch technique</li> <li>- Develop blocking technique against straight punches</li> <li>- Introduce blocking technique against hooks and uppercuts, as well as the parry technique</li> <li>- Develop sound body position</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Technical perfection must be stressed at all times when the above skills are being taught.</li> <li>• All skills must be trained in both stationary and dynamic positions.</li> <li>• One-sided skills must be balanced with a variety of play activities that require opposite movement patterns.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tactics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the knowledge of competition systems.</li> <li>• Knowledge and comprehension of Boxing-specific terminology.</li> <li>• Introduction to basic tactics to use against different style of opponents, and to “<i>thinking about of how to get an advantage</i>”.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Role of the Coach</b></p> <p>Coaches must consistently act as positive role models.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic training principles should be applied, and explained to both the athletes and their parents.</li> <li>• Introduction of boxers to basic mental skills, and integration of these skills into the regular training and pre-competition activities.</li> <li>• Basic information about sport nutrition and the importance of hydration should be provided to both the athletes and their parents.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations pertaining to training and competition</b></p> <p>The emphasis must be on training, and competitions should provide a positive experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly participation in 3-4 general sport and physical activity sessions</li> <li>• Weekly participation in 2-3 boxing specific sessions which should last between 45 – 75 minutes</li> <li>• Athletes may start competing at the age of 11. At this stage, they should participate to no more than 2 to 4 Club events per year, against opponents of the same size and calibre and in well-structured events. The competitive experience should be positive and enjoyable, and represent an opportunity for learning, and for the expression of the various physical, motor, and technical abilities.</li> </ul>

**Table 2.4- LTAD Stage - TRAIN TO BOX « Building the engine » Boys: 12 to less than 16 Girls: 11 to less than 15**

The main objective of this stage is to optimize fitness preparation, and Boxing-specific skills. Training volume should remain high, while intensity should increase with the importance of competitions. Some girls of this age group may start showing an interest for Boxing. If their sport background is limited, the emphasis must be placed on the basic aspects of Boxing and on general athletic development; consequently, some of the recommendations outlined in this table may not be relevant for them.

<p><b>Physical aspects</b></p> <p>For many athletes, this stage coincides with the growth spurt of the adolescence. The latter part of this stage is also the time at which peak strength velocity and peak weight velocity coincide with the period of opportunity for greatest strength gain.</p>	<p>During this stage, the focus must be on the following physical performance factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of aerobic endurance with the onset of the growth spurt.</li> <li>• Development of speed, and introduction of specific training methods for the anaerobic energy systems towards the end of the stage; the second window of optimal trainability for speed generally occurs between the ages of 11-15 in girls, and 13-16 in boys.</li> <li>• Strength training: the use of exercises using the athlete’s own body weight should be continued, and core strength should be emphasized; the systematic use of free weights for resistance training should be introduced during this stage, and proper movement execution must be emphasized at all times; for girls, the optimal strength development window during which free weights should be used occurs immediately after PHV or with the onset of menarche, and 12-18 month after PHV for boys.</li> <li>• Flexibility training should be emphasized throughout this stage.</li> <li>• Pre- and –post competition strategies should be developed to properly manage the athletes’ efforts (i.e. no excessive fatigue leading to competitions, and adequate recovery following competitions).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Technical and tactical aspects</b></p> <p>The focus must be on consolidating and refining fundamental Boxing skills, developing more advanced techniques, and enhance the competitive experience.</p>	<p><b>Techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Boxing skills should be consolidated. The boxer’s strengths and weaknesses should be identified, and specifically addressed as part of the technical preparation process.</li> <li>• The focus should be on the following Boxing skills :             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Optimizing straight punches technique</li> <li>- Developing hook and uppercut punches technique</li> <li>- Introducing and developing straight punches combination with hook and uppercut</li> <li>- Introducing and developing hook and uppercut combination</li> <li>- Optimizing straight punches combination</li> <li>- Developing counter punch technique against straight punches</li> <li>- Introducing and developing counter punch technique against hook and uppercut</li> <li>- Optimizing block technique against straight punches</li> <li>- Developing block technique against hook and uppercut</li> <li>- Developing parry technique and slip technique</li> <li>- Optimizing body position</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Tactics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus should be on the following Boxing tactics:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding and application of the philosophy of Boxing relative to winning and losing.</li> <li>- Acquiring and developing appropriate tactical and strategic abilities against different styles of opponents.</li> <li>- Working on consistency of performance in a variety of situations, and on appropriate selection of skills in specific competitive situations.</li> <li>- Recognition of match situation and fostering of appropriate decision-making.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Table 2.5- LTAD Stage – ACTIVE FOR LIFE « Enriched for life »**

**Male and female participants may enter at any age**

At this stage, the participant moves from competitive sport to lifelong physical activity and sport participation. In Boxing, this can be achieved through age group competition, or simply recreational enjoyment of the sport.

<p><b>Physical aspects</b></p> <p>To maintain or develop an adequate fitness level in order to enjoy life to the fullest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain aerobic fitness by walking or jogging at least 3-4 times a week for a minimum of 30 minutes each time.</li> <li>• Maintain an adequate level of strength through resistance training and other forms of conditioning exercises.</li> <li>• Maintain an adequate level of flexibility through various approaches, e.g. stretching, yoga or Pilates.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Technical and tactical aspects</b></p> <p>To continue to learn, and to share Boxing knowledge and experience with the others.</p>	<p><b>Technical – Participants can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perfect existing skills and learn new ones.</li> <li>• Engage in new aspects of the sport through volunteering of time (e.g., as a coach, referee, or club administrator).</li> <li>• Provide mentorship and developmental opportunities to young coaches and athletes.</li> <li>• Contribute to the ongoing development of Boxing through their involvement in community clubs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tactical – Participants can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share their tactical knowledge and experience with others (athletes, coaches, parents) for incorporation into competitive situations or athlete development.</li> <li>• Provide knowledge, ideas and experience to promote the sport, or contribute to its continued growth.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health and injury prevention</b></p> <p>To maintain a good health through a balanced and active lifestyle.</p>	<p><b>Activities – Participants should:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do at least 60 minutes of activity per day (moderate and vigorous intensities).</li> <li>• Practice a variety of sports and recreational activities.</li> </ul>



## CHAPTER 3 – SAFETY IN BOXING

The purpose of this chapter is to help coaches be able to:

- Appreciate some of the risk factors associated with the sport of Boxing.
- Apply appropriate safety precautions and measures in group coaching situations.

### 3.1- Risks Factors

By their very nature, most sports or forms of physical activity can present some risk of injury for the participants. As a demanding combative sport, Boxing is no exception.

One of the key responsibilities of the boxing coach is to manage the potential risks that present themselves during practice or competition. To do so, he or she must be constantly aware of the main risk factors involved in the sport, and take specific measures and precautions to reduce and control, as much as possible, these risks.

The main risk factors are listed in the following table. Specific measures to deal with them will be outlined in the following sections.

**Table 3.1-** Main risk factors in the sport of Boxing.

Category...	These risk factors relate to ...	Examples and application to Boxing
<b>Environmental risks</b>	The weather and/or its effects on the site or location where the sport takes place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme heat and humidity.</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment and facilities risks</b>	The quality and operating conditions of the equipment and the facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ill-fitting helmet.</li> <li>• Laces not inserted into gloves.</li> <li>• Debris or obstacles on the gym floor.</li> </ul>
<b>Human risks</b>	The participants and to the people who are associated with them, such as parents, coaches, officials, and event organizers. Human risks may also be related to a participant's individual characteristics (e.g. height, weight, level of physical preparation, ability) or behaviour (e.g. carelessness, panic, aggression). Human factors related to coaches include their training and experience, their supervision of the participants, as well as their decisions they make about situations in which they place the participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching participants whose height, body weight, and/or fitness levels are significantly different.</li> <li>• Matching participants of uneven experience or ability level; for instance, a boxer whose defensive skills are insufficiently developed who would be paired with another who has a wide range of attacking moves.</li> <li>• Uncontrolled aggressiveness by a participant.</li> </ul>

### 3.2- Safety Precautions to Reduce Environmental Risk Factors

Boxing is predominantly an indoor activity. For this reason, many environmental risk factors that can come into play in other sports or activities, such as rain, lightning, very high or low temperatures, etc. generally do not apply when training in a gym.

However, boxers may have to do certain forms of training outside. When extreme environmental conditions are present (e.g. heat and humidity; cold and wind), the safety measures outlined in the NCCP multisport module entitled *Plan a Practice* should be implemented.

An athlete's performance may be impaired as a result of dehydration. Because boxing is a very demanding sport, participants can sweat profusely and become dehydrated during gym training. An adequate temperature should therefore be maintained at all times in the gym (approximately 20 C) in order to avoid premature fatigue on the part of the athletes. Each boxer should also have his or her fluid bottle readily available, and be encouraged to drink regularly to replenish body fluids. Hydration breaks should also be planned during each session.

### **3.3- Safety Precautions to Reduce Facility and Equipment Risk Factors**

#### **The Boxing Gym**

The gym is a boxer's workshop where he/she learns how to master the skills of the sport, and condition his/her body for the stress of competition. Because the gym is the primary training site of the boxer, coaches must ensure the facility is safe.

In certain circumstances, the gym floor may become slippery, which can cause some injuries such as falls, sprains, etc., in addition to making boxers more vulnerable to the moves of their training partner. Similar consequences may occur if there are obstacles or debris on the floor. Coaches should inspect the gym before each session, and ensure the training surface is clean, and clear of any debris or obstacle.

Adequate lighting must be present in the gym to ensure optimal visibility by the participants.

Heavy bags, wall bags, and maise (or bean) bags are commonly used to help the boxer improve his or her repertoire of punches. All suspended fittings and springs should be checked before each session, as accidents or injuries can occur when using defective gym apparatus.

#### **The Boxer's Equipment**

The boxer must wear athletic clothing and footwear that are clean and fit him or her well. This includes:

1. clean training T-shirt or vests
2. trunks and socks
3. cross trainer athletics shoes or boxing boots

The protective equipment worn by boxers is listed and shown in table 3.2.

All pieces of protective equipment must be of the right size and correctly adjusted. Coaches should regularly inspect their athletes' equipment to ensure it is in good condition, and fits adequately. Athletes should wear all their protective equipment whenever they are engaged into a boxing activity with a partner.

Table 3.2- The Boxer's Protective Equipment



Competition Headgear



Sparring Headgear



Cup protectors (males)



Cup protectors (females)



Chest protector for female boxers



Personally fitted mouth guard



Fight gloves



Bag gloves



Sparring gloves

Particular safety considerations applying to gloves and to mouth guards are outlined below.

### *Gloves*

There are three types of gloves used in boxing:

1. fight gloves (used in competition)
2. sparring gloves (used in training with a partner), and
3. bag gloves (used to train on bags)

Regardless of the type, all gloves must be of the appropriate size and weight.

The weight of competition gloves is 10 ounces.

The weight of sparring gloves can be 14, 16, or 18 ounces. The purpose of sparring gloves is to protect the boxer and his or her partner, and for this reason they have more padding. As a general rule, younger and beginner boxers will wear 14-oz. sparring gloves. 16 and 18-oz. sparring gloves are generally used by taller, heavier boxers. However, a boxer who is strong and a hard hitter may use 16 or 18 oz sparring gloves, even though he or she may be relatively small and lightweight.

Although most clubs supply bag gloves, boxers should be encouraged to buy their own. This will ensure that gloves are of the appropriate size and weight, and fit properly. Also, because athletes with different hand sizes use “club gloves”, the quality of the padding can be disrupted. This can lead to incorrect punching and to some injuries to the hands and wrists.

In a group situation, all laces should be pushed down inside the glove before the gloves are put on. Velcro wristed gloves are ideal for group coaching, and eliminate any danger to the eyes from flying laces.

### *Mouth guards*

The mouth guard is a vital part of equipment used to prevent mouth and jaw injuries. Clamping down on the mouth guard will immobilize the jaw, and will also cushion the impact of punches. This will help to prevent teeth chipping and lacerations inside the mouth.

Mouth guards are a must for sparring activities.

Boxers and their parents should be encouraged to purchase the best boxing mouth guards available.

## **Bandages**

Bandages help to hold the bones of the hand together, while lessening excessive impact to the hand and wrist. Hands should be bandaged to reduce the risks of wrist sprains and metacarpal damage.

Annex 1 shows the proper procedure for bandaging the boxer's hands.

## **3.4- Safety Precautions to Reduce Human Risk Factors**

The following human risk factors are dealt with in this section:

- Group Size
- Participants' Attitude, Behaviour and Discipline
- Health Status of the Participants
- Prohibited Blows
- Matching of Partners
- Group Control and Management
- Progressions
- Sparring
- Physical preparation

### **Group Size**

The number of boxers involved in a group session should be determined by the size of the gym or hall being used. The pairs working together must have freedom of movement without risk of accident by colliding into other members of the group.

Given the size and configuration of the gym, it is ultimately the responsibility of the head coach to set a limit to the number of participants who should be involved at the same time.

### Participants' Attitude, Behaviour and Discipline

One of the guiding principles to promote enjoyment when coaching boxing skills to a group of beginners is the exclusion, where humanly possible, of pain and discomfort during the early learning stages. Participants must also feel good about themselves and what they are accomplishing in the gym. It is essential, therefore, to ensure that each participant has a clear understanding of the Club's philosophy, and displays the necessary attitudes and behaviours.

To achieve this, constant discipline is necessary within the group to protect the less experienced boxers, and to ensure that advantage is not taken of them by misguided participants whose behaviour could be unethical, for instance through a misuse of their superior skill or experience while sparring. The coach must encourage the best type of sportsmanship and conduct on the part of every boxer, and at all times. Given the nature and the demands of the sport of boxing, there should be zero tolerance for bullying attitudes and practices. It is also important that everyone in the group accepts that, at no time outside the gymnasium or competition ring, will he or she make an inappropriate use of boxing skills.

Although they are not necessarily safety-related, other elements of discipline to instil in the group include social aspects such as punctuality, respect and politeness, and responsible behaviours which all help the coach's task considerably if adhered-to by the participants.

The following table outlines an example of Boxing Code of Conduct that could be presented to beginner boxers. Coaches and athletes should engage in open discussions about the specific implications of each statement, and coaches should be clear about their expectations and about the consequences in case of infraction or non respect by the athletes.

**Table 3.3-** Sample Code of Conduct for Club Boxers

<b>At all times, I make the commitment to do the following to the best of my ability:</b>
1. Listen to the coaches, and apply their instructions in a timely manner.
2. Do my best in training and in competition.
3. Show respect towards all the people I deal with (other participants, training partners, opponents in the ring, coaches, club administrators, referees and officials, spectators, parents, etc.
4. Be courteous, and display a positive attitude towards the others and the sport.
5. Wear all my protective equipment, verify that it is in good condition and well adjusted, and ensure others do the same for their own safety.
6. Respect all the rules in training or in competition, and never attempt to execute an illegal or forbidden blow or move.
7. Never attempt to injure another boxer deliberately.
8. Never use techniques or moves that are too advanced for my training partner, or could represent an unfair challenge for him or her.
9. Remain in control of my emotions and of my actions.
10. Refrain from using my boxing skills outside the gym or the boxing ring.
11. Use gym equipment correctly, safely, and in a responsible manner.
12. Report any injury or health-related condition that could impact my boxing to the coach.
13. Be ready on time.

### Health Status of the Participants

Each boxer registering with Boxing Canada must pass an annual medical examination. At the time of weighting in for a competition, a boxer is also required to go through another medical examination.

At any time during the boxing program, the coach should not hesitate to request a full medical examination if he or she has doubts about the health status of a participant.

In addition, athletes should be encouraged to report injuries or medical conditions to the coach before each session. The coach should then decide whether or not the participant can be involved in the activities, or make adjustments to accommodate the particular condition of the athlete.

### Prohibited Blows

Coaches must be clear with their boxers that prohibited blows are totally unacceptable, and will not be tolerated. These blows are against the rules, reflect a complete lack of sportsmanship, and can lead to serious injuries. Table 3.4 outlines a few key points concerning prohibited blows, including potentially dangerous consequences. This information should be discussed with the boxers.

**Table 3.4-** Some Prohibited Blows and Their Potential Consequences.

<b>Prohibited Blows</b>	<b>Possible Consequences</b>
<b>Blows with the inside or the edge of the glove or with the open glove</b>	These blows, especially to the face, tear the skin and may cause bleeding wounds (eyebrow injuries, etc.) which, in turn, may result in the interruption of the match and the disqualification of the guilty boxers. These wounds are often relatively slight, but they are completely unnecessary. However, much more serious injuries can be caused to an eye it is hit with the thumb.
<b>Butting</b>	Butting is hitting the opponent's face or chin with the head. It is a most serious infringement of the rules. Dangerous wounds, and in some cases fractures (jaw, nose, etc.) may result of butting.
<b>Butting while ducking</b>	When attacking or defending themselves, some boxers have the habit of crouching so low that they can hit their opponent below the belt with their head. See below for more information.
<b>Low blows or blows below the belt</b>	The "belt" is taken to mean a line at the level of the edge of the hip bone through the navel. Blows below the belt are forbidden, and intentional low blows are strictly punished. All blows below the belt are extremely painful, and they can lead to serious injuries to the reproductive organs. The wearing of protector is compulsory to protect the boxer against the risk of such injuries.
<b>Blows to the kidneys</b>	These blows are strictly prohibited as there is a risk of grave injuries and sometimes permanent damage to the kidneys (rupture of the kidney, haemorrhage, chronic problems, etc.).
<b>Pivoting or swinging</b>	These blows are delivered as cutting blows with the forearm against the

<b>blows</b>	neck and may result in the fracture of the spinal chord.
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### **Matching of Partners**

During training and simulated bouts, it is critical that boxers are properly matched. Participants must always be paired according to the following criteria: size, ability level, experience, and fitness.

One of the most important points to keep in mind when coaching boxers of any age group is that no athlete should ever be faced with an attack for which he/she has not learnt an adequate defence. Overmatching athletes in the gymnasium or in competition is most irresponsible, as it could lead to serious injuries, and can be a major cause of discouragement on the part of the less skilled or experienced boxer.

### **Group Control and Management**

Teaching combat sports requires constant vigilance by the coach, as well as a certain formality to ensure an adequate level of control prevails at all times over the group. For instance, the coach must ensure that the behaviour of participants always meets expectations, and that drills take place as they should. Boxers must be trained to pay attention to certain signals, and all activities should stop immediately upon request by the group leader.

The coach must be careful not to involve certain participants in skills or types of punches that constitute a danger at the stage of learning they are at. It is recommended to group the boxers by ability level, so that each group can focus on skills that are adapted to its experience and learning rate.

To assist in ensuring adequate control and supervision, each ability group should also have a leader. In addition, each pair within the group should be encouraged to help his/her partner and to provide his/her own insight into the skills being practiced.

### **Progressions**

A paramount safety principle in Boxing is that a participant should never be involved in a competition until he or she is deemed sufficiently skilled and fit.

In training, specific progressions should be used in the teaching of attacking and defence skills. As mentioned previously, no boxer should be faced with an attack for which he/she has not learnt an adequate defence. During the early stages of learning, the emphasis must therefore be on teaching the correct stance and fundamental defensive movements.

For beginners to acquire and develop a sound technique, boxing skills should be taught in the progressive sequence outlined in Chapter 5.

## **Sparring**

Sparring is a highly specific form of training in which two boxers work in the ring to refine their skills and improve their stamina. The following are key safety points that apply to sparring:

- Boxers should engage into spar sessions only when deemed skilled enough by the coach.
- Boxers must wear all their protective equipment during a spar session, including spar gloves.
- All spar sessions should involve boxers who are suitably paired in experience, ability, and fitness.
- All sparring should take place under the direct supervision of a competent coach. The coach must be in complete control at all times, and make sure that the boxers are working in conditions that are appropriate for learning.
- At the initial stage of boxing development, only technical sparring should be permitted.
- A boxer should never progress to an “all in” spar unless the coach is satisfied that he/she:
  - is competent in the basic skills, and
  - has adequate defences to cope with the attacks of his /her sparring partner
- The training partner must not be allowed to drive blows directly to the head and to the body until the learning boxer has mastered all the fundamental defensive skills. In the early stages of sparring, the palm of the gloved hand should be used as the target for all punches to the head.
- When the boxer’s various defensive skills are deemed adequate, the coach should carefully integrate the “whole” target area into the sparring activities.

## **Physical Preparation**

General and specific fitness training activities must be incorporated into the boxing program to reinforce the body, and develop the various athletic abilities that support boxing performance.

A fit boxer will perform better, be able to train more and more effectively, and will also recover faster. Because skill execution and technique tend to deteriorate with fatigue, a suitably conditioned boxer is also less at risk of being injured in training or in competition.

Chapter 1 of this manual identifies the key physical performance factors involved in boxing. Chapter 7 outlines sample training activities to develop motor skills that support performance in Boxing. Physical preparation and conditioning for Boxing will be dealt with as part of the Club Coach manual.

### **3.5- Emergency Procedures**

An adequately maintained first aid box is a must for all boxing gyms. There should also be at least one individual qualified in the area of first aid present at all times in the gym to treat minor injuries that can occur.

Given the nature of the sport of boxing, each gymnasium must have a thorough emergency action plan (EAP) in case of accident requiring professional assistance. The EAP is a plan designed to assist coaches in responding quickly and effectively to emergency situations. The idea behind having such a plan prepared in advance is that it will help group leaders respond in a clear-headed way if an emergency occurs.

An EAP should be prepared for the gym where the athletes normally train and for any facility or site where the Club regularly host competitions. For away competitions, coaches should ask the host Club or facility manager for a copy of their EAP.

The responsibility of designing and implementing the EAP rests with the head coach of the boxing Club. However, apprentice coaches must also be familiar with the EAP procedure, and know their specific roles in case of an emergency.

Annex 2 shows an example of an EAP that can be used in a boxing gym. Coaches and athletes should simulate situations requiring the use of the EAP, so that everyone knows exactly what to do in the event of a real emergency situation.

### **3.6- Injuries to the Head**

Head injuries and concussions can occur either in training or during competitions. Because of the potentially grave consequences of injuries to the head, coaches must take certain precautions and should enforce strict safety measures when dealing with them.

Annex 3 outlines some information about head injuries and concussions. It is not designed to train coaches on how to implement a medical treatment, or to offer medical advice in the event of a concussion. Clearly, this is the responsibility of specialized medical personnel.

Rather, this information is included to help coaches manage situations involving head injuries in a responsible manner.

If a boxer is knocked out, it is imperative that he or she sees a doctor as soon as possible in order to receive the most suitable treatment. The coaches should refer to the information outlined in Annex 3, and determine the best course of action to should be followed with the athlete in consultation with the medical personnel.

### 3.7- Safety Considerations in Boxing: Summary

The following tables present a summary of the key points concerning safety and risk management discussed in this section.

**Table 3.5 – Main safety measures to reduce the risks of injuries in Boxing.**

<b>Risks</b>	<b>Safety Measures to Reduce Risk Factors</b>
<b>Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gym floor is kept clean, dry, and free of obstacles.</li> <li>• All suspended gym equipment (bags) is inspected before each session.</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to athletic clothing and footwear, boxers must wear specific pieces of protective equipment to reduce the risks of injuries. Those include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ personal headgear for competition and training</li> <li>○ personal cup protector</li> <li>○ chest protector (female boxers)</li> <li>○ personally fitted mouth guard</li> <li>○ bag gloves</li> <li>○ spar gloves</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The boxer’s equipment is regularly inspected to ensure proper fit and adjustment, and must be worn whenever the athlete is engaged into boxing situations with a partner.</li> <li>• Laces are inserted into gloves to avoid eye injuries, and gloves with Velcro attachments are used whenever possible.</li> <li>• Hands are bandaged to reduce risks of wrist sprains and metacarpal damage.</li> </ul>
<b>Human factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group size is controlled during training to avoid collisions between boxers and to ensure coaches can offer adequate supervision.</li> <li>• A philosophy is in place within the club:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the rules of Boxing are taught, and must be respected at all times</li> <li>○ boxers with more experience must refrain from using their superior skill in an unfair manner when paired with less experienced boxers</li> <li>○ boxers are to remain in control of their emotions and behaviours at all times</li> <li>○ boxers must show respect to their partner or their opponent</li> <li>○ aggressive behaviours, attitudes, and bullying are not tolerated in the club</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Participants are not involved in any competition until they are deemed sufficiently skilled and fit.</li> <li>• During training and simulated bouts, participants are paired according to: size, ability level, fitness, experience.</li> <li>• Specific progressions are used when teaching attacking and defence skills.</li> <li>• The training partner is not allowed to drive blows to the head and to the body until the learning boxer has mastered all the fundamental defensive skills.</li> <li>• General and specific fitness training activities are incorporated into the boxing program to reinforce the body.</li> </ul>
<b>Injuries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An emergency action plan is in place in case of a serious injury in the gym.</li> <li>• Athletes must report injuries or medical conditions to the coach before each session.</li> <li>• Injured athletes are not permitted to compete; depending on the nature of the injury, training activities may be adjusted, or put on hold until the athlete has recovered.</li> <li>• Return to training is done progressively following an injury.</li> <li>• Specific procedures are in place in the case of injuries to the head and concussions.</li> </ul>

**Table 3.6 – Important Boxing Rules Related to Safety in Competition.**

<b>There are Specific Rules Concerning the Following Aspects in Boxing:</b>	
<b>Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The boxers must wear all the protective equipment required: head gear; mouthpiece; athletic suspender and protective cup; female chest protector (optional), competition gloves -10 ounces.</li> </ul>
<b>Type of blows allowed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No unfair blows can be given (i.e. with the inside of the gloves; below the belt; in the kidneys; back of the head or neck; hitting while holding the opponent; hitting while the opponent is down; kneeling over the opponent; hitting with the head).</li> </ul>
<b>Decisions by the Referee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A qualified Referee must be present in the ring to make decisions about the proper conduct of the fight; one of key aspects he or she is responsible for is the prevention of injury.</li> </ul>
<b>Length of rounds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The length of rounds will be determined according to age and experience and weight as per Boxing Canada rules.</li> </ul>
<b>Appropriate Matching of Opponents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants are matched in categories, according to body weight.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The bout is stopped if one boxer is clearly at a disadvantage, and could be seriously injured by his or her opponent.</li> </ul>



## CHAPTER 4 – TEACHING PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

The purpose of this chapter is to help coaches:

- Appreciate some of the factors that influence the quality of interaction with athletes.
- Apply basic group leadership and management principles when coaching beginners.
- Use a proven process for effective teaching and coaching interventions.

### 4.1- Factors Influencing the Quality of Interaction with Athletes

#### Communication and Respect

Coaching is about helping others to become better. It involves a relationship with the participants, either as individuals or as a group and the group. With this comes the interaction of different personalities, and effective communication is critical for success.

The coach should communicate in a manner that is firm, yet supportive and friendly. Depending on the situations, a coach can use his or her sense of humour, remain calm, show excitement, etc., to convey his or her message to the group or to an individual.

The negative emotions of anger and sarcasm have no place in the coaching process. Rather, coaches should use encouragement and praise as teaching methods to motivate their athletes, and avoid resorting to criticism.

#### Appearance

Hand in glove with the demeanour of the coach is his/her appearance to the group. The wearing of appropriate sport clothes conveys a certain intention towards action and hard work, and the coach should pay attention to this factor.

His/her posture should also be good, upright and active, reflecting that he/she is interested in what is going on in the gym. A slack or slovenly posture indicates a somewhat careless attitude, and hence a less effective coaching standard.

## **Effective Use of Voice and Choice of Words**

The appropriate use of the coach's voice is critical for quality teaching and communication in a gym environment. The following factors are most important in the effective use of the voice:

- volume – it should be adjusted to suit the situation and to emphasize specific points
- speed – many coaches are inclined to speak too quickly – slow down
- clarity - every word must be audible
- expression – to promote interest in the listeners, it is important to provide variation in tone

Coaches must always keep in mind that athletes learn mainly by *doing* rather than by seeing or listening. With this in mind, when communicating with their athletes, coaches should use sentences and words that:

- get clearly to the point
- are concise
- are meaningful
- cut out jargon

## **Participants' Enjoyment**

One of the most important factors in the learning process is enjoyment.

The coach must aim at making each boxing session as interesting as possible, and help his or her athletes find enjoyment in the rhythm of skilfully executed movements both in attack and defence.

Coaches should find out which activities or training conditions participants enjoy the most and, where possible, take this information into account when planning or implementing activities.

## **Coaching Ethics**

Coaches are role models. They are in a position of authority, and as such assume significant responsibility over (1) what boxers do while involved in their programs, and (2) what happens to the participants. Coaches must therefore exercise good judgment, be clear about their values, and behave ethically at all times.

Boxing Canada adheres to and follows the NCCP Code of Ethics developed by the Coaching Association of Canada (see Annex 4). Apprentice coaches should take the time to become familiar with this code and the related principles. A process as well as ethical principles that coaches can use when making important decisions are explained and dealt with in detail in the multisport module entitled *Make Ethical Decisions*. In order to become certified, Boxing coaches are required to attend this module, and to complete successfully the evaluation process.

## 4.2- Fundamental Teaching Principles

**Note:** This section outlines basic teaching principles that have been proven effective for coaches. Boxing coaches will be exposed to these principles in greater detail, and to several other aspects of teaching, when they attend the NCCP multisport module about *Teaching and Learning*.

The following aspects pertaining to teaching will be covered in this section:

- Organization
- Control of Distractions
- Position of the Coach
- Group Formations
- Demonstrations and Explanations
- Learning Styles
- Observation
- Feedback to Athletes
- Questioning of Athletes

### Organization

Effective coaching organization requires the best possible use of the space, time, equipment, and facilities. When organizing activities, boxing coaches should always:

- Think about how to *begin* and *finish* the activity or a drill.
- Take into account the safety issues of the activity or drill.
- Plan for the equipments that will be necessary *before* the activity or the drill takes place. The equipment must be verified for safety before the session, and prepared ahead of time so that it is available at the time of the activity. (**Note:** *in certain boxing drills, the partner's gloves can be used as a piece of equipment: for instance, where punching is involved, the palm of the gloved guarding hand makes a suitable target*).
- Organize the activity in a way that allows each athlete to remain active during at least 50% of the practice time allowed; more is desirable, unless pauses are required and deliberately planned, for instance to promote recovery. (**Note:** *coaches may need to pay attention to groups with odd numbers of boxers, to ensure adequate involvement and interest from each athlete*).

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- Organize the activity in a way that enables athletes to progress at their own pace whenever possible.
- Ensure participants can begin the activity quickly and efficiently after the instructions are given.
- Ensure individual boxers, pairs, or groups have sufficient space to perform the training task safely and correctly. (*Note: After the demonstration, the group often disperses in pairs to practice and discover the skill for themselves; some thinking may be necessary to ensure optimal use of the available room in the boxing gym.*)
- Set up the environment in such a way as to allow themselves to move around, and see every boxer without interfering with the activity.

### Control of Distractions

During a demonstration or when they are performing an activity, the athletes should be positioned with potential distractions behind them. Potential distraction factors include:

- Sun in the eyes
- Reflections
- Activity in the street
- Other groups of athletes training or talking
- Spectators

### Position of the Coach

The coach's position in relation to the group is always an important factor. Below are important coaching situations where adequate positioning of the coach is important:

- During an explanation and a demonstration, the coach must position himself or herself in such a way as to be seen and heard clearly by everyone in the group. Coaches have to think about the best vantage points for the athletes **before** beginning any demonstration. *Note: See next section Group Formations for examples.*
- The coach must be sufficiently close to the athletes that there is no need to yell during a demonstration, an explanation, or when providing feedback.

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- Sometimes, the same demonstration has to be repeated several times from a variety of angles to ensure all athletes can see it well. If necessary, coaches can turn 90 or 180 degrees and do the demonstration again so that everyone can have several views, and has the opportunity to observe from the best vantage point.
- When the athletes are performing the activity, the coach should be able to circulate without disturbing the athletes. As mentioned previously, this requires good organization.
- During the activity, the coach must position himself/herself so that the *overall* skill or drill can be observed from an appropriate vantage point. This is critical in order to analyze performance, and to isolate specific points in the movements that may need to be corrected. *Note: Effective methods for analyzing athletes' performances will be dealt with later in this manual.*

### Group Formations

It is important to choose an effective formation in order to be seen and heard by the athletes. The choice of formation depends on:

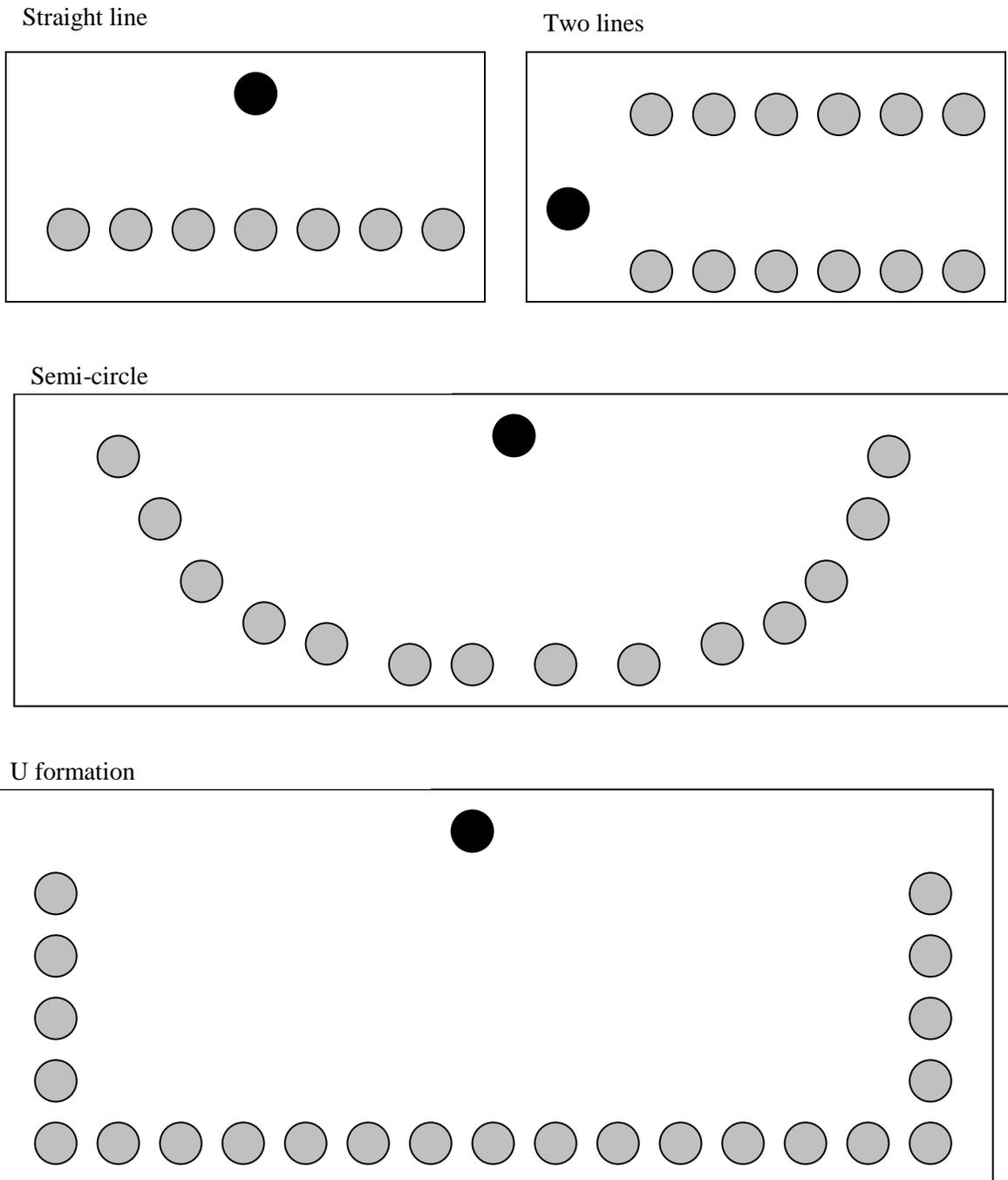
- the space available,
- the kind of message (information, explanation, demonstration), and
- the number of athletes

The diagrams on the following page show common formations coaches can use.

These basic formations can be adapted to meet the needs of larger groups, for example, coaches can:

- Make two rows: the front row kneeling or sitting, and the second row standing.
- Make three rows: front row sitting, the second kneeling, and the third standing.

**Figure 4.1-** Examples of group formations that can be used with athletes during explanations and demonstrations.



## Explanations and Demonstrations

Although they are distinct from each other and have their own purpose, explanations and demonstrations often take place at the same time in the coaching process, or at least very close to each other. For this reason, both will be dealt with in this section.

When teaching a skill or a technique, the *explanation* serves to:

- Describe the aim of the movement, exercise, drill, or activity about to be performed
- Outline *what* is to be done and *how*
- Describe points of reference/cues for the athletes

The *demonstration* complements the explanation. Its purpose is to *show* athletes how a particular skill or move should be done, and to give them a good visual model. Effective demonstrations are vital in helping to reinforce the brief verbal description or explanation of a skill or activity.

The following points should be kept in mind regarding technical explanations and demonstrations:

- The explanation that introduces the demonstration should be brief, clear, and use words all athletes can understand.
- The athletes must have a clear idea of *what they should be trying to do* during the activity or the movement (the *intention* behind the action).
- The skill or movement must be demonstrated as accurately as possible, a few times, and from a variety of angles and speeds. This will ensure that a mental picture of the movement, and of the speed and accuracy required, is left with the group.
- A few key descriptive points *about* the execution movement should also be emphasized verbally as the demonstration is being performed, as well as *how* it should be performed.
- A few key criteria of successful performance or execution should be emphasized.
- Coaches do not have to perform the demonstrations themselves all the time. Sometimes, it is preferable to use an athlete, a video, etc.
- However, coaches must avoid repeating the demonstration too many times, as athletes who have already seen it enough may “switch off”.

**Note:** *When the athletes actually perform the drills, it is suggested that they should focus on the intention and the outcome of their actions, rather than on how they are executing the movement.*

## Learning Styles

All people do not learn the same way. For a coach, knowing the preferred learning style of an athlete can help in selecting specific strategies that will promote learning. Key points to know about learning styles include:

- To a large extent, a person's preferred learning style is linked to the sensory channel he or she uses the most to learn (i.e. hearing, seeing, feeling).
- It is fairly common for people to display a combination of two, and sometimes even three, learning styles.
- The characteristics of each learning style, as well as recommended strategies to use with each style, are outlined in Table 4.1.
- It is natural for a person to teach in the same way he or she learns best. However, this will likely not work for all the athletes. Therefore, coaches may need to adjust their preferred teaching approach to maximize the learning opportunities for their athletes.
- Choosing appropriate strategies, actions, and words as a way of acknowledging the preferred sensory channel of the athletes is very important. It is also important to deliver the same message in several different ways when in front of a group of people.

**Table 4.1** - Key points about the three main learning styles, and strategies for teaching them.

	<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
<b>Auditory Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often referred-to as “talkers”; seldom quiet. They tell jokes, tall tales, and are full of excuses why something is not done.</li> <li>• Follow oral instructions easily.</li> <li>• May have difficulty with written work and copying. They often have rather poor handwriting, drawing and other art work. They have trouble reproducing seen figures and letters, and generally they have poor visual memory.</li> <li>• Remember spoken words or ideas quite well. They may answer better when questions are explained to them verbally compared to when they must read them.</li> <li>• Like musical and rhythmic activities.</li> <li>• Tend to memorize easily, and they often know all the words to songs.</li> <li>• Often have poor perception of time and space and often do not keep track of time easily.</li> <li>• May appear physically awkward. They often have a poor perception of space and may get lost in unfamiliar surroundings.</li> <li>• Often have mixed laterality (left hand – right footed)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach them to talk through the steps in a task or activity.</li> <li>• Encourage them to think out loud, and listen to what they are saying.</li> <li>• Utilize tape-recorded instruction for information.</li> <li>• Use lots of audio equipment in the learning process.</li> <li>• Pair the individual with a visual learner.</li> </ul>
<b>Kinaesthetic-Tactual Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are often quite literally a “mover”, and considered hyperactive.</li> <li>• Appear to want to feel and touch everything, rub their hands over objects; they can’t keep hands to themselves.</li> <li>• Are usually quite well coordinated.</li> <li>• Enjoy doing things with their hands. They like to take things apart and to put things together.</li> <li>• May truly enjoy writing things down.</li> <li>• Utilize concrete objects as learning aids, especially those that can be manipulated easily.</li> <li>• Learn best by doing and exploring the environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use movement exploration.</li> <li>• Have them tap tempos and rhythms.</li> <li>• Use all the concrete, manipulative devices possible in the teaching/learning mode.</li> <li>• Employ role playing where possible.</li> <li>• Let them assist you in creating learning aids.</li> </ul>
<b>Visual Learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often do better when you <u>show</u> them rather than <u>tell</u> them.</li> <li>• May have difficulty with oral directions, or appear confused with a great deal of auditory stimuli.</li> <li>• Have a tendency to watch your face when they are spoken to.</li> <li>• Like to look at books and pictures.</li> <li>• Like things orderly and neat. They often dress in an attractive manner.</li> <li>• Can generally find things that are lost; seldom misplace their own things.</li> <li>• Often can recall where they saw something some time ago.</li> <li>• Notice details. They are good proofreaders; see typing errors, notice if your clothing has a flaw.</li> <li>• Can find pages and/or places in a book quite easily.</li> <li>• Often draw reasonably well – at least with good balance and symmetry.</li> <li>• May use minimal words when responding to questions; may rarely talk in a group situation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give visual directions and demonstrations as often as possible.</li> <li>• Use visual aids such as film, videos, images, overheads, books, magazines, slides, panel boards, etc.</li> <li>• Use colour-coding systems and highly visual aids.</li> </ul>

## Observation

During the activity, the coach must observe what is going on, i.e. what the athletes are actually doing and how they are doing it. Through the observation process, coaches must:

- Ensure that the athletes get involved in the activity quickly (rapid transition).
- Check that athletes have a clear understanding of the task at hand, in view of the instructions that were given.
- Ensure that the activity or drill is appropriate for the skill level of the participants, and that it is not beyond their current abilities.
- Ensure that there is a good rate of success among the athletes, i.e. most of the athletes are able to achieve the desired outcome.
- Be actively involved in the supervision of the boxers, so that they get to see ALL the athletes during the activity. Coaches should scan the group and move around to watch what is going on from different vantage points.
- Be sure to watch each athlete, so that they can be aware of the individual differences in performance, and can then provide personalized feedback.
- Find out if the athletes have fun, or if they are not bored or discouraged.

Where necessary, coaches must be prepared to make adjustments to the program or the activities to ensure:

1. Safety standards are respected.
2. Training and learning objectives are being met.
3. Participants remain focused and interested.

Chapter 5 of this manual outlines the fundamental technical points boxing coaches should observe when analyzing an athlete's performance and skill execution. Chapter 7 presents a performance analysis model coaches can use while observing their athletes.

## Providing Feedback

*Note: The topic of Feedback is covered in greater depth in the NCCP multisport module about Teaching and Learning.*

Feedback is the process by which the coach informs the athlete or the group about:

- their performance
- what to improve, and how to do it (if necessary)

Providing quality feedback is an art in itself, and it is a coaching skill that takes some time to develop, and refine. In order to provide quality and effective feedback, the coach must first:

1. Perform an accurate analysis of the performance.
2. Prioritize the aspect(s) of the performance on which the athlete should work.
3. Identify appropriate actions or measures to correct the errors observed.

These three steps relate to performance analysis, and will be dealt with later in this manual. The rest of this section will focus on fundamental principles that should be applied by Apprentice Coaches when providing feedback to athletes.

There are three types of feedback, and those are described in the table below.

**Table 4.2-** Types of feedback and examples.

Types	Definitions	Examples
<b>Evaluative</b>	The coach assesses the quality of the performance; he/she makes some kind of assessment or judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That's fine!</li> <li>• Good job!</li> <li>• No, not like that!</li> <li>• Not good enough!</li> </ul>
<b>Prescriptive</b>	The coach tells the athlete how to execute the skill next time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher! (general)</li> <li>• Get your left arm higher! (specific)</li> </ul>
<b>Descriptive</b>	The coach describes to the athlete what he/she has just done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The move was too slow (general)</li> <li>• Your arm was really well extended (specific)</li> </ul>

## Boxing Canada - Apprentice Coach Reference Material

When providing feedback coaches should respect the following guidelines:

- Timing is everything for giving feedback: the athlete needs to be open to hearing it, and near enough to hear the coach.
- To promote skill improvement, the information provided must be directly linked to the most important aspects of the skill or the behaviour to be improved (i.e. primary cause of error/failure given the circumstances the athlete is in).
- The amount of information provided must be adequate. It must be as easy to understand, as accurate and as specific as possible. To do so, the coach must: (1) really know the skills the athlete is working on; (2) have a clear reference point as far as correct execution is concerned; and (3) be in the right place to observe the athlete's performance. Examples of general and specific comments are provided in the previous table.
- The feedback must also be formulated in a manner that is positive and constructive. This is important in order to preserve the self-esteem of the participant and motivate him or her to work on improving.
- Lastly, feedback should be balanced, i.e. it should contain information on both what has been done well, and on what still has to be improved.

Other general points about feedback Apprentice Coaches should know include:

- Let the athletes practice without always interrupting them. The more you talk, the less they can practice! Although feedback is important and contributes to learning, giving feedback too often, or too much at any one time, should be avoided.
- Repeating the same general comments, (e.g., "That's great!", "Keep going!") is not enough. It's not that it is bad, but effective feedback is more than simply general encouragement.
- As much as possible, the way the feedback is provided should reflect the preferred learning style or sensory channel of the athlete. Refer to Table 4.1 for some information on different learning styles.
- In the case of motor skills, a demonstration (i.e. non-verbal feedback or the execution of a very precise movement) is often a useful form of feedback to give to the athlete.
- Feedback given to the whole group is often effective to emphasize key aspects of a skill or deal with common errors.

Coaches may find it useful to use the self reflection tool on the following page to assess the quality of the feedback they provide to their athletes. This form is also reproduced in Annex 5, so coaches can make copies and use it in the gym.

**Form 4.1-** Feedback evaluation form.

**Ask Yourself These Questions  
During and After the Practice**

**Was my feedback:**

- Specific, not general, for example: "You did \_\_\_\_\_perfectly!" instead of "That's fine!"?
- Positive and constructive, not negative and humiliating?
- Directly linked to the skill or behaviour to be improved?
- Informative and relevant to the most important performance factors?
- Balanced? Did it contain information on what the athlete did well and on what still needs improvement? E.g. "Your \_\_\_\_\_ (movement) is better than last time. The next thing to do would be to \_\_\_\_\_ (add another level of complexity to the movement, or a particular piece to refine)".
- Clear, precise, and easy to understand? E.g. did I use simple words?

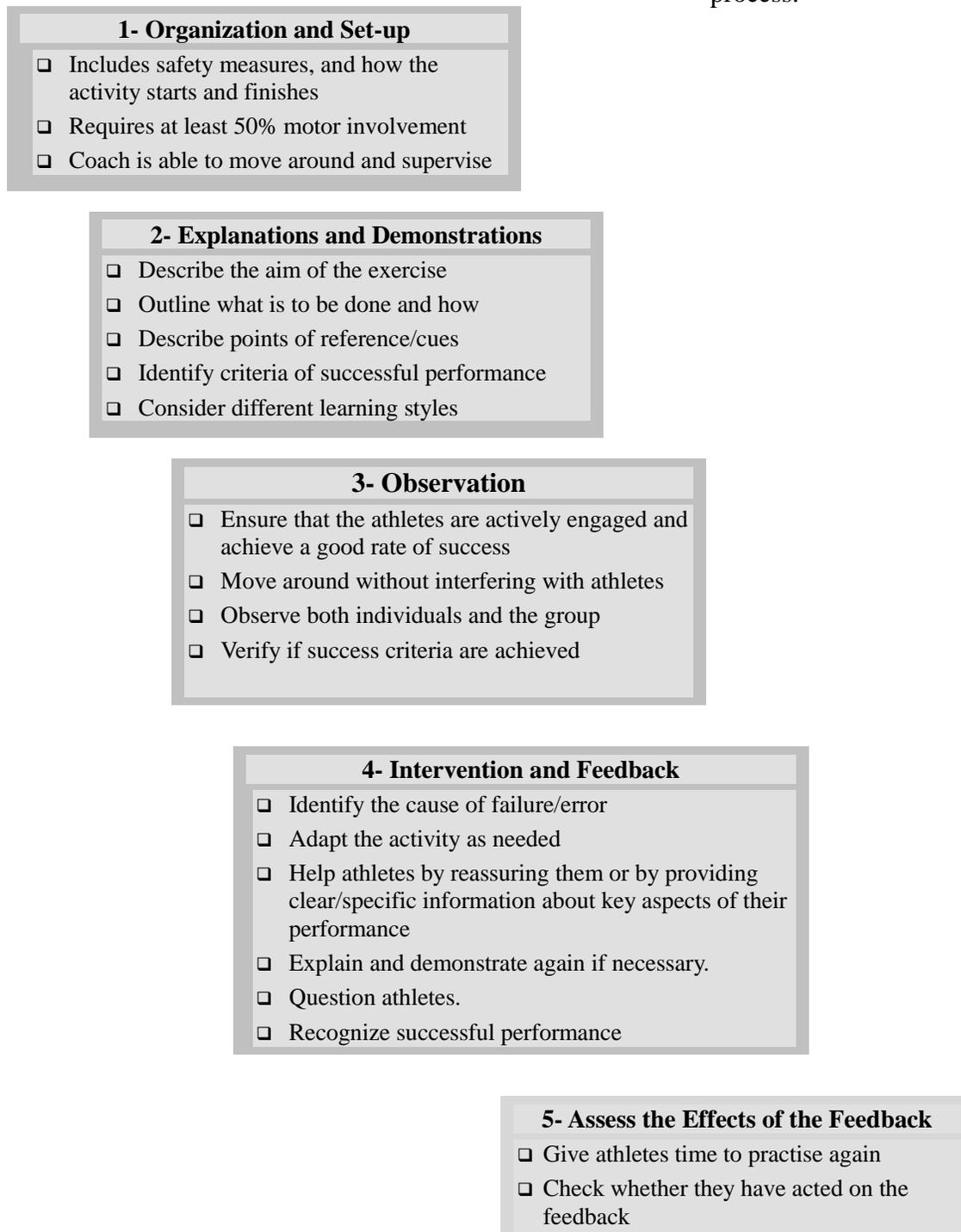
**Questioning**

Since any teaching or coaching is a two-way process, effective coaches regularly *promote* a response from the athletes they work with by framing questions carefully. This increases the cognitive involvement of the participants, thus promoting better learning and helping to keep a higher level of interest on their part. For instance:

- What should you be trying to do in this situation?
- Why do you think this is important?
- If you do this, than what could happen?
- What should you focus on when doing this particular skill?
- When could it be most effective to use this move?

Figure 4.2 on the following page presents a summary of the key points of the teaching/coaching process discussed throughout this section.

**Figure 4.2-** Representation of the coaching/teaching process.



*Adapted from the Coaching Association of Canada  
NCCP Introduction to Competition, Part B  
Learning Facilitators Guide*



## CHAPTER 5 – BASIC BOXING SKILLS

The purpose of this chapter is to help coaches teach the following fundamental boxing skills:

- Basic boxing stance
- Footwork and balance
- Pivot and punch mechanics
- Jab and power punches to the head and to the body
- The defences against jab and power punches to the head and to the body
- Basic combinations
- Covering up

### 5.1- Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the primary purpose in boxing is to strike the opponent with the knuckle part of the glove (Picture 5.1) on a given target area (Picture 5.2), without being struck in return.



**Picture 5.1-** Hitting Area of the Boxing Glove.



**Picture 5.2-** Target Area in Boxing.

This chapter covers the fundamental boxing skills that should be taught to beginners. Skills are presented and described in the recommended order of teaching, i.e. the boxing stance first, then footwork, etc.

## 5.2- Boxing Stance

### Importance of Balance in Boxing

There is an age old boxing adage saying that “any fool can fight, but very few can box”.

At the root of this statement is the critical principle whereby a boxer must adopt a stance that will enable him/her to effectively move in the ring, and to both attack and defend while constantly remaining in a balanced position.

The success of nearly all boxing skills depends upon the stability of a boxer’s fighting stance, or base. If a boxer loses balance even momentarily, he/she is in no position to attack or defend and becomes extremely vulnerable.

### Balance: General Concepts

*Balance* is the ability of an athlete to control his or her equilibrium or stability. As a boxing coach, you need to know and understand two types of balance:

**1- Static balance:** The ability to control the body while the body is stationary.

*Example—A boxer uses static balance when he or she prepares for driving a punch.*

**2- Dynamic balance:** The ability to control the body while in movement.

*Example—A boxer uses dynamic balance when he or she moves the body to avoid a punch.*

To achieve adequate balance while boxing, the athlete must:

1. flex his/her knees;
2. ensure his/her support base is adequate; this is done by keeping a sufficient gap between his/her feet, and by keeping one foot ahead of the other;
3. “slide” with his or her knees flexed when moving, as opposed to “hopping”.

Of course, the above must be done to an “optimal degree”, given the specific movements performed by the boxer.

However, coaches should always pay attention to these technical aspects: if the legs are straight and the feet kept close together, the boxer will not be able to maintain proper balance.

## Technical Aspects of the Boxing Stance

### *Position of the feet*

One of the most critical aspects of any hitting sport is the base or platform formed by the feet. From his or her base, the boxer should be able to produce a wide variety of punches without disturbing his/her balance.

From a standing position with feet shoulder width apart, the boxer takes a striding pace forward with the front foot turning the body, and the rear foot in a sideways position (Picture 5.3).



**Picture 5.3-** Correct Position of the Feet.

In this position:

- 1) The weight on the balls of the feet, and the bodyweight is evenly distributed between both feet.
- 2) The rear heel is raised slightly, and offset from the midline of the body.
- 3) Both knees are slightly flexed. A short period of trial and error will enable the boxer to find the individual foot spacing best suited for optimal balance.

### *Body Position*

The boxer is concerned with protecting his or her own target area (see Picture 3.2) and making it as small as possible for his/her opponent, yet at the same time making his/her own reach more effective.

The trunk should be slightly bent forward, with the center of gravity exactly between the feet. The front shoulder should afford comfortable protection for the chin (Picture 5.4).

### *Position of the Hands and Arms*



The following are key points about the positions of the hands and the arms:

- 1) The lead hand (left hand for a right-handed boxer) must be carried at shoulder height, in the same plane that will enable the boxer to pivot and to punch. The knuckles should be loosely clenched and turned slightly inwards.
- 2) The rear hand (right hand for a right-handed boxer) should be offset from the rear collar bone, with the palm slightly open for catching an opponent's blow, yet constantly ready for punching.
- 3) Both elbows should be comfortably tucked in to protect the ribs.

**Picture 5.4-** Front View of the Boxing Stance.

### *Head Position*

The head should be still, with the boxer watching his or her opponent “through the eyebrows” to avoid lifting his or her chin and exposing it to a blow.

**Note:** *In the initial learning stages, boxers should regularly check their stance in the mirror, using a mental checklist of the appropriate technical elements.*

## 5.3- Footwork

### Importance of Footwork

Having established a comfortable stance which allows the body to move forward or backward as a unit and without loss of balance, the boxer must next acquire the skills of transporting and moving his or her base effectively within the confines of the ring.

This is critical in order to be in a position to attack or defend effectively during a fight.

### Executing Elementary Footwork

Four elementary footwork skills should be thought to beginner boxers: advancing, retreating, moving left, and moving right.

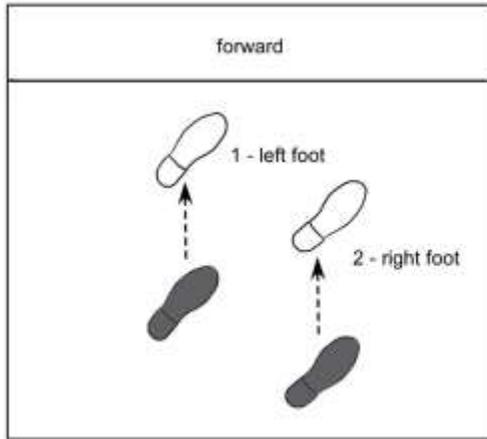
Picture 5.5 shows basic footwork movements for an orthodox (i.e. right handed) boxer.

- 1) **Advancing** – The stability of the boxer’s body weight must not be disturbed when advancing. The movements of the feet should be short and dynamic, one foot being in contact with the floor at all times. Pushing off with the ball of the rear foot, the boxer slides the lead foot forward bringing the rear foot up quickly into the original stance position. The boxer must not hop.
- 2) **Retreating** – The boxer pushes off the ball of the front foot, and then moves the rear foot backward. The front foot then slides back into the boxing stance position to maintain balance.
- 3) **Moving side to side** – The left foot leads off first with a short shuffling pace if moving to the left side, and vice versa when moving to the right side.

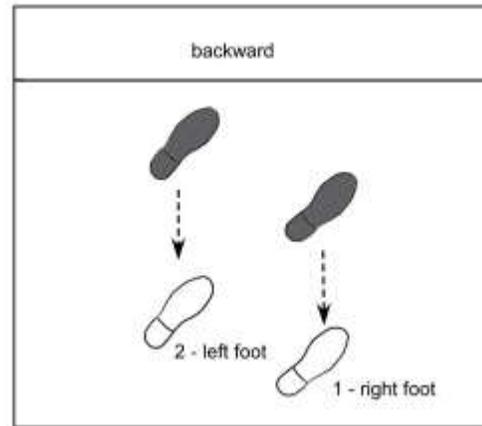
At no time should the feet cross during the above movements.

*Note: When the boxer performs a punch, both feet must be planted.*

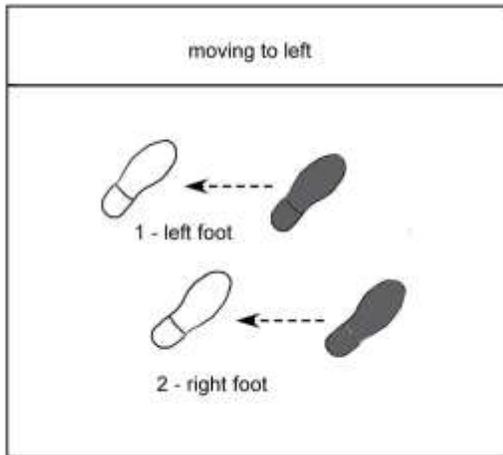
**Picture 5.5-** Basic Footwork Movements for an Orthodox (i.e. right handed) Boxer.



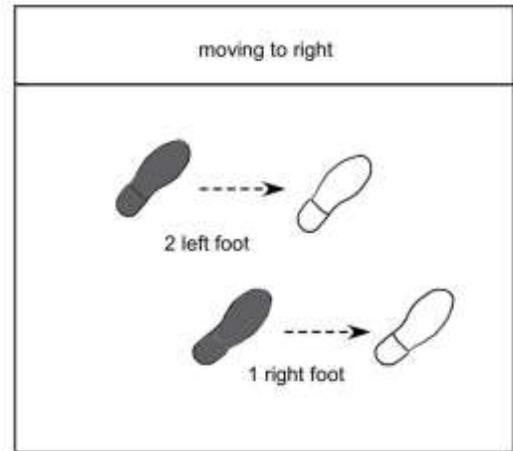
**Advancing**



**Retreating**



**Moving to the left**



**Moving to the right**

## Basic Drills for the Footwork



In the initial learning stages, the coach should introduce partner games to stimulate interest and enjoyment.

For instance, dodging a mark with boxer A (the attacker) trying - with effective footwork - to keep his or her leading foot within striking distance of boxer B throughout the drill (Picture 5.6).

Toe fencing also helps to develop fleetness of foot and balance, so important for successful boxing technique.

**Picture 5.6-** Example of Footwork Drill

## Pendulum Steps

Pendulum steps are a more advanced footwork skill that requires good timing and coordination on the part of the boxer. For this reason, it should be used sparingly by beginners.

When performing pendulum steps, the boxer is bouncing back and forth, as though he or she were skipping. The hops are small and controlled, and the boxer is in constant movement: forward and back, forward and back, hence the term “pendulum”.

To perform pendulum steps the boxer:

- Shifts weight back and forth while remaining on the balls of his or her feet.
- Pushes off the ball of the rear foot when moving forward, and off the ball of the front foot when moving backward.
- Performs small steps: approximately one inch (3 cm or so) of movement with each forward or backward shift of weight.

Teaching tips:

- During the initial stages of learning, the boxer should move slowly, and feel the shifting of his or her body weight from the front foot to the rear foot, and vice versa.
- Pendulum steps should be practiced in the boxing stance.
- Coaches should always emphasize that modern boxing is *mobile boxing*. A boxer should never stay still, because he/she then becomes vulnerable to an opponent's attack, and is unable to initiate a quick appropriate defence.
- Compared to the basic footwork, the boxer expends more energy when using pendulum steps. However, this technique can be very effective at delivering a powerful jab that will catch the opponent off guard.

When teaching a boxer to jab while using pendulum steps, the following points must be kept in mind:

- The boxer initiates the jab as he or she begins to drive forward or backward
- Ideally, the jab should land on the target at the same time as the foot lands.

## 5.4- Fundamental Aspects of the Straight Punch

### Introduction

Early on, beginner boxers must learn the correct execution of the straight punch, as well as the defences against straight punches, as these are two of the most fundamental boxing skills. Good balance, footwork, and straight punches are the main tools of a technically sound boxer.

The correct execution of a straight punch involves a series of movements by separate parts of the body, and each must work in a certain sequence. As mentioned in Chapter 1, some coordination is required for effective execution.

There are two types of straight punches: the *jab* and the *straight power punch*. However, they all have the same mechanics. The information provided in this section is therefore valid for all types of straight punches, and for each hand.

### Basic Mechanics of the Straight Punch: the Pivot

In punching, the arm and the hand act as the vehicles of force transmission. The explosiveness of the movement comes from a sharp pivot of the hips and shoulders.

To project the fist at maximum speed, the torso rotates around the vertical axis, as the knees flex to lower the center of gravity. The rear leg is in contact with the floor, and its drive assists the rotary movement of the torso (Picture 5.7).



To get the feel of the pivot principle, boxers should imagine a rod running through the head, down the spine and into the floor.

A rod so placed would allow one movement: a turning or pivot of the body to the left or to the right. The rod would prevent swinging, swaying or bending in any direction.

It is important to make the boxer understand the basic mechanics of the pivot principle. This movement must be practiced over and over until it becomes perfect, and natural.

**Picture 5.7-** Pivot During a Punch.

### Key Components of the Straight Punch

Pictures 5.8 and 5.9 show front views of punches correctly executed. During the execution, both sides of the body remain firm, yet relaxed. Each picture outlines a straight punch to the head.



**Picture 5.8-** Straight Punch with the Right Hand.



**Picture 5.9-** Straight Punch with the Left Hand.

When executing the straight punch:

- The boxer must make the fist, by folding the thumb comfortably on the outside between the first and second joints of the forefinger (Picture 5.10).
- The arm is extended after the hips and shoulders have turned through the central axis (pivot).
- For straight punching, the boxer rotates the forearm inward, toward the center line. Contact is made with the back knuckles, with the wrist slightly flexed. The thumb, if extended, would be pointing to the floor (Picture 5.11).
- The punch must be made directly to the target. The hand returns to the punching position on the same line, and the boxer bends the arms so that the elbows are close to the ribs, as in the normal stance.



**Picture 5.10-** Fist Position.



**Picture 5.11-** Wrist Position.

The following key points about punching should be emphasized to learning boxers:

- Power and precision in punching come from shifting the body weight so that the links of the body – hip and shoulder – *precede* the arm to the center line of the body.
- The arms are the *vehicles* of force transmission: arm action alone *cannot* give power to punches.

### **Teaching the Mechanics of the Straight Punch: Progressions**

- 1- When teaching the basic mechanics of the straight punch to beginners, coaches can break the skill into parts, and provide instructions as the boxers execute the movements. For instance, coaches can instruct participants to:
  - Assume the boxing stance, and hold the fists so that the thumb side is upward.
  - Select the target (the head or the body).
  - Plant both feet to initiate the drive of the straight punch.
  - Pivot the body at hip and shoulder about the central axis.
  - Punch *through* the target.
  - Turn the forearm as the punching arm extends. At impact the thumb side of the hand is in, and the knuckles are up.
  - Return to the initial boxing stance quickly, and remain in balance.
  - Keep the leading hand high in a guarding position.

The sequence can be repeated several times, until the arms can drive forward like pistons.

- 2- During the learning stages, boxers can also *accentuate* the movement by *stepping forward with the front foot* as they perform the punch. In doing so, the center of gravity will move *over* the front leg. A screwing action of the ball of the rear foot should initiate the drive from the rear leg, and the pivoting heels should be kept close to the ground.
- 3- When the basic mechanics of the punch can be correctly performed without a “real target”, beginners should move on to the punching bag, the wall bag, or the palm of the partner’s gloved hand.

*Note: In a progressive program of boxing skills for participants aged 11-14 years, there is considerable support to the view that punches with the leading hand (i.e. the jab) as well as the associated defences, should be taught first, and emphasized throughout the initiation stage. The discovery of rear hand hitting power too soon may result in the neglect of boxing skill, whereas early concentration on a lateral stance and work with the leading hand will benefit the technical development of the young boxer in the long term.*

## 5.5 - The Jab to the Head

Sound technical boxers rely heavily on the use of the jab. This straight punch is performed with the front hand, which of course is carried nearest to the opposing target in the normal orthodox stance. This punch, and its many variations, is really the foundation on which to base the boxer's attacking technique.



Picture 5.12- Jab to the Head (side view).



Picture 5.13- Jab to the Head (rear view).

The main purpose of the jab is to keep the opponent off balance, and to expose him/her to a series of more punches (Picture 5.12).

Successful jabbing depends upon judgment of distance, timing and deception.

When teaching the jab, coaches should ensure that boxers:

- Aim for the point of the chin of the opponent.
- Keep the jabbing hand relaxed, and snap it away from the body with a slight pivot at hip and shoulder.
- Rotate the forearm in the last third of the distance to the target.
- Punch at the target (point of the opponent's chin), landing with the knuckles; as with the straight power punch, the wrist of the jabbing hand must be slightly flexed with the thumb, if extended, pointing toward the floor.
- Hold the rear hand in a guard position, with the elbow tucked in to protect the body.
- Retract the jabbing hand quickly, along the same path as the delivery.
- Perform smooth movements throughout, and remain in a balanced stance.

*Note: The jab must be thrown at maximum speed.*

## 5.6- Defence against the Jab to the Head

During the early stages of learning, coaches must give priority to the basic defences outlined in this section. Little progress can be accomplished until the boxer has mastered the Block Guard and the Outside Parry.



**Picture 5.14-** Block Guard.

When teaching the Block Guard, coaches should ensure that boxers:

- Catch the opposing jab in the open palm of the back hand.
- Keep the forearm rigid, so that the glove is not forced back into the face by the opposing punch.
- Do not reach for the opponent's jab.



**Picture 5.15-** Outside Parry.

When teaching the Outside Parry, coaches should ensure that boxers:

- Allow the opposing jab to come close to the target (a few centimetres).
- Perform a slight pivot, and move the forearm and rigid palm of the back glove to deflect the jab over the front shoulder.

### 5.7- Jab to the Body



**Picture 5.16-** Jab to the Body.

The main purpose of the Jab to the Body is to force the opponent to pull his/her hands down, thus exposing the head. To perform this skill, the boxer:

- Bends the knees sharply to drop the shoulders on line with the opposing body target.
- Drives the jab from the shoulders to the target. The punching arm must be extended, and perpendicular to the target.
- Punches at the target, making contact with the back knuckles. Here again, the wrist must be slightly flexed with the thumb, if extended, would be pointing toward the floor.

This can be an exposed position, so the boxer should withdraw the jab quickly. At this point, he or she can follow up with additional punches, or retreat according to the situation.

When a boxer jabs to the body, the coach must insist that, as a precaution, he or she keeps (1) the chin tucked behind the front shoulder, and (2) a high rear guarding hand.

### 5.8- Defences Against the Jab to the Body

To defend against the Jab to the Body, the boxer uses the Elbow Block technique. In this defence, he or she intercepts the opponent's jab with the front or rear elbow, depending upon the situation. During the execution, the body pivots to meet the punch. The hands are kept high, and ready to counter. The center of gravity is maintained well within the base to ensure good balance.



**Picture 5.17-** Right Elbow Block.



**Picture 5.18-** Left Elbow Block.

## 5.9- Straight Power Punch to the Head

*Note: Arguably, the premature discovery of the rear hand's hitting power is one of the biggest handicaps for a learning boxer to overcome. Coaches should be aware of this, and always emphasize correct execution over the sheer power of the blow.*

### Introduction

The straight power punch is a hard punch, which should be used sparingly in a competition. It is essentially a counter punch or follow-up punch when the target has been opened up with the leading hand.

### Technique and Key Points

Effective power punching with the rear hand is obtained from a strong contraction in the rear leg, which in turn initiates a powerful rotation of the hip and shoulder around the imaginary central axis. The front side of the torso acts as the hinge, as the rear hand drives to the target.



- After driving off the rear foot, the boxer's hips and shoulders rotate explosively, using the forward side of the body as a hinge.
- The boxer's body weight is quickly shifted to the front foot, and the back arm extends completely as it is being driven to the target in a powerful movement.
- At impact, the boxer's forearm rotates: the knuckles are facing up, and the thumb side of the fist is turned inward.
- Throughout the execution, the boxer keeps the leading hand high in a guarding position.
- The "T" shape formed by the shoulders must remain horizontal, and balance must be maintained throughout the execution.

**Picture 5.19-** Straight Power Punch to the head

Initially, the Straight Power Punch to the head should be practiced on the punching bag, the wall bag, or the palm of the partner's gloved hand

## 5.10- Defence against the Straight Power Punch to the Head

### Introduction

In theory, the good boxer should rarely be caught by a rear hand Straight Power Punch to the head, as (1) it has further to travel to the target than the jab and (2) it usually remains in the line of vision on the way. However, because this punch is very powerful, the aspiring boxer must acquire and develop a sound defence against it in the early stages of his or her learning.

### Techniques and Key Points

The defences against the Straight Power Punch to the head are the *Forearm Block* (Picture 5.20) and the *Parry* (Picture 5.21).

To execute the Forearm Block, the boxer:

- Rotates his or her body slightly.
- Intercepts the opponent's Straight Power Punch with his or her forearm.
- Keeps the chin down and his or her rear hand high in guarding position throughout the movement.

To execute the Parry, the boxer:

- Uses his or her front hand, and deflects the punching hand of the opponent.
- Keeps the chin down and his or her rear hand high in guarding position throughout the movement.



**Picture 5.20** – Forearm Block.



**Picture 5.21** – Parrying Technique.

When learning the Parrying technique, the movements of the attacker must be slowed down until the defender can cope with punches executed at normal speed.

### 5.11- Straight Power Punch to the Body



The execution of the Straight Power Punch to the Body has some similarities with the Straight Power Punch to the head discussed earlier. When teaching this skill, coaches should ensure that boxers:

- Bend the knees, and drop their body, so that their shoulders are in line with the target.
- Pivot the hips and shoulders to drive the rear arm to the target.
- Rotate the forearm when extending the arm, hit with the rear knuckles, and keep the thumb side of the fist turned inward at the moment of impact.
- Carry the front hand in a guarding position.

**Picture 5.22-** Straight Power Punch to the Body.

*Note: The straight Power Punch to the body is considered as a counterpunch against the attacking opponent.*

### 5.12 – Defence Against the Straight Power Punch to the Body



To defend against the Straight Power Punch to the body, boxers use the Elbow Block.

When teaching this technique, coaches should ensure that boxers:

- Rotate the body slightly, and intercept the straight Power Punch with either the right or the left elbow.
- Keep their chin down, and carry the rear hand in a position to counter.

**Picture 5.23-** Elbow Block.

### **5.13- Basic Combination Punching With the Jab**

When he or she is confident that the boxer's fundamental technique is adequate, the coach should introduce the principles of combination punching.

A combination is a series of punches thrown in a particular sequence.

The novice should be initiated to combinations with the jabbing hand, building up a rhythm as the punches fall into a natural pattern. The following progressions are recommended:

#### **The Double Jab to the Head**

When performing this combination, the boxer:

- 1) Scores with an explosive jab to the head.
- 2) Retracts the jabbing hand quickly.
- 3) Jabs a second time – even if the first one misses the opponent will have difficulty avoiding the second.
- 4) Adjusts his or her range according to the situation.

#### **Jab to the Chin – Jab to the Body**

When performing this combination, the boxer:

- 1) Delivers an explosive jab to the head.
- 2) Bends his or her knees, and throws the jab to the body maintaining the center of gravity well within the support base for good stability.

#### **Jab to the Body – Jab to the Head**

When performing this combination, the boxer:

- 1) Bends his or her knees, and throws the jab to the body maintaining the center of gravity well within the support base for good stability.
- 2) Returns to the boxing stance, and jabs quickly to the head of the opponent, keeping the back hand guard high.

### **5.14- Basic Combinations Using the Straight Power Punch**

The coach should restrict the use of combinations to the double jab and to the simple variations listed in the previous section until they are thoroughly mastered by the boxer.

When he or she feels the athlete is ready for more advanced skills, the coach should introduce basic combinations using the Straight Power Punch to the Head in order to add variety to the boxer's repertoire. Two examples are described in this section.

When teaching these combinations, coaches must always insist on the basics of balance and mechanics of punch.

#### **The One Two (Jab and Straight Power Punch)**

This combination consists in the following moves:

- a fast jab, quickly followed by
- a pivot, and then
- a dynamic Straight Power Punch to the head

#### **Double Jab and Straight Power Punch to the Head**

This combination consists in:

- a double jab, with the emphasis on speed of execution, quickly followed by
- a fast straight Power Punch to the head

### 5.15- Counter Punching with the Straight Power Punch



Although beginner boxers must be taught not to rely too heavily on the Straight Power Punch to the Head during these early stages of their career, coaches should allow them to practice the three following basic counters:

- Lead hand parry followed by a rear hand counter to the head (Picture 5.24).
- Elbow block, and rear hand counter.
- Straight Power Punch to the body against the opposing jab.

In the initial stages of learning, the partner's gloves and forearms should be used as the targets. These skills should also be practiced slowly at first, with an

**Picture 5.24-** Rear Hand Counter to the Head.

### 5.16- Covering Up



Coaches must teach their boxers how to cope with an attack from both hands. As a last resort against a series of punches thrown by the opponent, the boxer must learn the skill of Covering Up.

This defence is a temporary measure, and will enable the boxer's target to be protected until the opportunity to counterattack arises. To perform this skill, the boxer should:

- Protect his or her body with the elbows and forearms.
- Hold the gloves against the cheek bones to protect the chin and face.
- Keep the body moving from the waist.
- Watch the opponent at all times, ready to turn defence into attack.

**Picture 5.25-** Double Arm Cover.

This guard can be practiced with partners during technical sparring. Coaches must stress the need for the boxer to keep the eyes fixed on the attacker at all times when using this defence.





## CHAPTER 6 – BASIC RINGCRAFT, RULES AND TACTICS

The purpose of this chapter is to outline key aspects coaches should consider when teaching fundamental tactical notions to beginner boxers:

- 1) Basic ringcraft principles.
- 2) How the *traditional* and *computerized* scoring systems work.
- 3) How to adjust tactics during a fight to account for the use of a computerized scoring system.
- 4) Basic points to keep in mind when facing left-handed boxers.

### 6.1- Introduction

*Ringcraft* is the ability to effectively solve problems posed by an opponent in the ring.

The experienced boxer is quick to assess the weakness and strength of an opponent's style, and can adapt his/her tactics accordingly. The key word here is "experience". It must be impressed upon the novice boxer that:

- this particular type of boxing knowledge and ability is based on both experience and an adequate physical condition, and
- it is not something that he/she will be endowed with overnight.

The coach should also stress from the outset that there is no special "ringcraft method". Rather, ringcraft consists in the:

1. proper and timely application of a series of well-proven principles, and
2. ongoing analysis and decision-making by the boxer during the fight.

## 6.2- Fundamental Ringcraft Principles

The following ringcraft or tactical principles should be taught to beginner boxers as they prepare to participate in competitions:

- 1) Boxing is a thinking game. Out-think the opponent, and you can outscore him/ her.
- 2) Learn all the basic moves and puzzle the opposition with a variety of them. Never overplay one particular move. Do exactly what the opponent does not want you to do.
- 3) Do not punch until you are into range. When the opening presents itself, punch quickly to the target. Do not wait. The lead hand being nearest to the opponent is the safest lead.
- 4) Remember that a straight punch will “beat” a hook or a swing. The feet should be anchored when actually punching. It is impossible to punch effectively while on the move.
- 5) Keep the hands high and the chin down – watch your opponent through the eyebrows. Do not make wasteful or unnecessary movements yet be wary of presenting a sitting target. Keep the feet under the body while moving – when off balance the whole target area is exposed to attack.
- 6) Try and note any mannerisms that an opponent may show preceding a particular move or punch.
- 7) Always be in good physical condition, because skill execution deteriorates with fatigue. Relax, because tension slows down reaction time and brings on local muscle fatigue.
- 8) Appear confident all the time. Try not to show it if you are tired or hurt. Your opponent is probably just as tired as you.
- 9) Never stop trying: one punch could turn the contest your way.

## **6.3- Understanding the Scoring Systems Used in Boxing**

### **Introduction**

In amateur boxing competitions, the winner of a bout is determined, in the majority of cases, by judges assessing the performance of the contestants through “scoring” the delivery of correct hits.

Several years ago, the traditional method of scoring changed and became computerized, at least for all national and international competitions.

This section will outline the specific criteria by which the boxers’ performance in the ring is evaluated, and winners are declared. The two different methods of scoring (Traditional and Computerized) will also be described.

In order to prepare their boxers to compete successfully, coaches must be familiar with these fundamental criteria and with both scoring methods.

### **Criteria Used for Scoring Amateur Bouts**

This method has been the standard all over the world for the past 50 years, and is described in the Rules of AIBA and Boxing Canada.

- 1) The boxer who, as determined by the majority of judges, lands the most correct scoring blows on the target area of his/her opponent shall be the winner of the bout.
- 2) A scoring blow is defined as a blow with the knuckle part of the closed glove connecting with the weight of body or shoulder.
- 3) Blows that miss the target area, or are blocked or guarded, or hit the arms, are not valid scoring blows, neither are those connecting while the boxer delivering the blow commits a foul or which land before the referee’s command “box” or after the command “stop”.
- 4) The target area is defined as any part of the front or sides of the head or body above the belt (line).

### **Traditional Scoring Method**

The traditional scoring method works as follows:

- Each of the five or three judges around the ring observes the bout, identify each scoring blow and count the scoring blows of each boxer.
- The judge gives the winner of each round, i.e. the boxer having delivered the highest number of scoring blows, 20 points.
- The points for the loser of the round are calculated as follows: the difference in scoring blows between the contestants is divided by 3, rounded off, and this value is then taken off from 20. For instance: if there are 1, 2, 3 or 4 scoring blows difference: the loser of the round gets 19 points; if there are 5, 6 or 7 scoring blows behind, the loser of the round gets 18 points; if there are 8, 9 or 10 scoring blows behind, the loser of the round gets 17 points; etc.
- If both boxers have scored the same number of scoring blows, then the judge awards the bout to the boxer who was leading off the most and, if that is even, to the boxer with the best style or the best defence.
- Judges write the points after each round on standard forms (score sheets). At the end of the bout, each judge adds up the points of each boxer and declares a winner for the bout based on the total obtained. The jury awards the win to the boxer who was declared the winner on all (unanimous) or the majority (split decision) of the judges' score sheets.

### **Computerized Scoring Method**

In 1990, AIBA made computerized scoring mandatory for all international tournaments. Boxing Canada rules also require computerized scoring for all national level competitions held in Canada.

The main purpose of computerized scoring system is to ensure fair, objective and purely technical decisions for the boxers.

### **Standard AIBA Specifications for Computer Scoring Systems**

- All computerized scoring systems, regardless of make and origin, have the following specifications as a minimum standard:
  - each judge has a keyboard with 4 buttons connected to a computer:
  - red and blue point keys for recording scoring blows, and
  - red and blue W keys for recording warnings
- Each time a judge presses a button, the computer records that action.
- If a scoring blow is recorded by one of the judges, this opens a 1-second window. If two or more additional judges press the same key within that second, this results in an “accepted” score for the boxer.
- The computer accumulates a running total of “accepted scores” for each boxer. This means that all the scores for each boxer are kept throughout the match, and carried over from round to round. The winner is the boxer with the most points at the end of the match.
- If the accepted total score is the same for each boxer, the computer automatically adds up the individual judges’ scores. The winner is the boxer who received the highest total from all individual judges scores after the highest score for red, the lowest score for red, the highest score for blue and the lowest score for blue have been taken out. If this still does not break the tie (which is very rare...), then each judge presses the point button once for the boxer he or she considers to be the winner.
- In case of a foul, the guilty boxer receives a warning. The referee then interrupts the match, and signifies the fault. If at least three (3) judges agree with the warning, this results in an “accepted Warning”, and the opponent of the guilty boxer has two (2) points added up to his/her accepted score.

### **Specific Aspects of Computerized Scoring That May Affect Results**

- Judges must see a correct scoring blow land on the target area before scoring. Due to obstructed vision, not all judges can always see a punch land and score. Some areas of the ring afford greater visibility than others for the judges to see a blow land on the target area and recognize it as a scoring blow.
- Only scoring blows count. There are no subjective factors in the scoring method.
- Points are cumulative over three (3) or four (4) rounds, rather than a 20 point system for each round. This means a boxer can be behind in two or three rounds, but win with a good last round (or vice versa).
- An “accepted warning” results in two (2) points being awarded to the opponent’s accepted score, rather than one point being taken off the warned boxer’s score.

## 6.4- Boxing Tactics and the Computerized Scoring System

When the computerized scoring system is in use, it is important to ensure the boxer's tactics and ringcraft are adjusted accordingly. Important points for the coach to keep in mind are listed below:

- Defence is as important as offence. The boxer must always try not to give the opponent an opportunity to score. Avoiding a blow is as important as scoring a blow.
- A warning gives the opponent two points – which in a close bout are difficult to make up. The boxer must always box clean, to the rules and avoid warnings.
- The landing of the blow must be clearly visible to the majority of judges in order to result in an accepted score. Blows thrown from the “outside” in the center of the ring, with the boxer facing a corner, have the best chance of being seen to land by the majority of judges. Wild, inaccurate or sloppy punches, especially those thrown near the ropes and in close range of the opponent, have the least chance of resulting in accepted scores.
- The area near the red corner is a “blind zone”, where punches cannot be seen by more than one or two judges. Consequently, it can serve as a “safe zone” for the defending boxer, and the attacker can waste a lot of energy for nothing in this part of the ring.
- The boxer who is ahead in points after two or three rounds must concentrate on maintaining his/her margin and protecting his/her lead, i.e. he or she must focus on defence. He/she does should not make a stationary target of himself/herself, should not “slug it out” but rather should keep moving and stay away from the center of the ring.
- The boxer who is behind in points after two or three rounds must concentrate on attack, on landing clean and clearly visible scoring blows, and, if possible on boxing in the center of the ring.

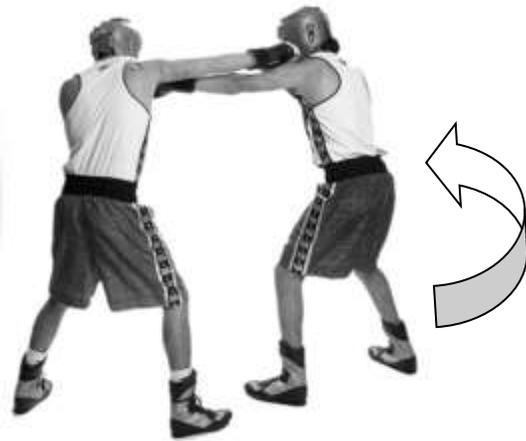
Given the specific characteristics of the computerized scoring system, the following principles should therefore influence the boxer's ringcraft and tactics when it is in use:

- Defence is as important as offence throughout each bout.
- When attacking, the focus must be on clean scoring blows easily identified by all judges.
- Fouls and warnings must be avoided at all costs.
- Physical conditioning is a must for the “extra efforts” that may be required in the last round.
- The boxer must know and exploit to his or her advantage the locations of the ring where it is easy or difficult for judges to see a blow land.

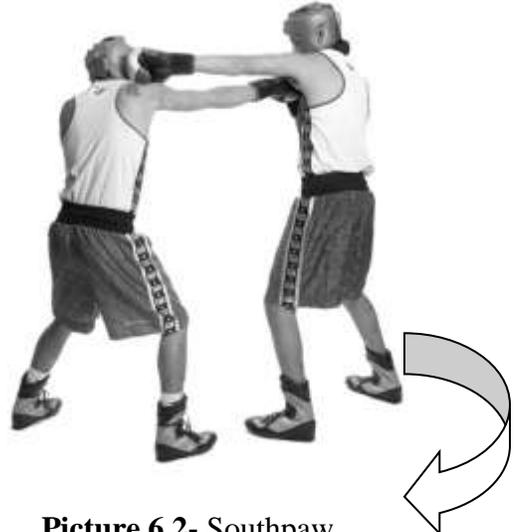
## 6.5- Basic Points Concerning Left-Handed Boxers

- Left handed boxers are often called *Southpaws*. They are also referred-to as “*unorthodox boxers*”.
- These boxers put their right foot forward when they assume the basic boxing stance, jab with their right hand, and throw power punches with their left hand (which in their case is the rear hand). To an "orthodox" or right handed fighter, a southpaw's punches are therefore coming from the wrong side. When a right handed and a left handed boxer fight each other, their lead foot is almost on top of the other person's.
- For the most part, Southpaws tend to be good counter punchers.
- In most cases, left-handed boxers move around the ring to the right i.e. *circling away* from the right hand of the orthodox boxer.

Pictures 6.1 and 6.2 show some Southpaw moves against a right-handed boxer.



**Picture 6.1-** Southpaw stepping to the *right*, and crossing the right jab over the lead.



**Picture 6.2-** Southpaw moving to the *left*, and jabbing the right inside of the opposing lead.



## CHAPTER 7 – GYMNASIUM WORK

The purpose of this chapter is to help coaches:

- 1) Become familiar with common pieces of equipment used in the gym, and how to make effective use of such equipment.
- 2) Apply a sound structure to gym training sessions.
- 3) Select exercises and activities that are appropriate to the development stage of the athletes.
- 4) Use proper progressions when teaching attacking and defensive techniques.

### 7.1- Introduction

The gym is a boxer's workshop where he/she learns how to master the skills of the sport, and conditions his/her body for the demands and the stress of competition. Coaches must therefore be familiar with specific pieces of equipment that are commonly found in gyms, and know how to use them effectively in the process of developing the boxers' skills and fitness.

To be effective and produce the desired training outcomes, gym sessions must also be properly structured, and feature the right type of activities and exercises. For this reason, coaches must select the right types of activities and exercises for the participants, i.e. activities that (1) are adapted to their stage of development and rate of learning, (2) will foster a sound athletic development in the long-term, and (3) will be fun.

### 7.2- Gym Equipment

Table 7.1 lists various pieces of equipment commonly found in boxing gyms, and briefly describes how they can be used in training. Many gyms also have special areas where boxers can perform training exercises using mats, benches, dumbbells, barbells, Swiss balls, Medicine balls, etc.

**Table 7.1-** Equipment commonly found in boxing gyms.

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Its Use in the Boxing Gym</b>
<p><b>Heavy Bags</b></p> 	<p>Heavy bags come in different sizes and weights. They are held by chains at the top, and suspended. Heavy bags are essential for boxers to practice their repertoire of punches.</p> <p>Although the bag cannot hit back, the boxer should always be conscious of his/her defensive position when working on the heavy bag.</p>
<p><b>Wall Bags</b></p> 	<p>As their name implies, these bags are fixed to a wall.</p> <p>They are particularly useful for developing combinations of straight arm punches.</p>
<p><b>Focus Pads</b></p> 	<p>The terms “pads”, “focus pads”, “target pads”, “punch mitts” are used to describe this equipment, and reflect the various methods and styles in using them.</p> <p>These pads are a vital coaching aid and can also be used as a means of putting training stress upon the boxer. On the pads the boxer “grooves” his/her skills before putting them to the test in the ring.</p>
<p><b>Maise/Bean Bag</b></p> 	<p>This is a pear shaped leather bag, suspended on a rope or chain, and used to practice a variety of punches with the accent on speed rather than power.</p> <p>The bean bag is a useful tool in teaching your boxer to punch at the target. If the boxer is punching properly, the bag will have minimal movement.</p>
<p><b>Skipping or Jumping Ropes</b></p> 	<p>Jumping or skipping ropes are commonly used in a boxer’s conditioning program. They can be used to enhance: coordination, agility, quickness, footwork, and aerobic endurance. Ropes should be used with the length adjusted to suit the height of the individual.</p> <p>Beginners should be encouraged to persevere with what can be a difficult skill to learn and master initially. With regular practice, however, they will progress to more advanced skills such as <i>rope crossing</i> and <i>double jumping</i>.</p>
<p><b>Mirrors</b></p>	<p>In the gym, a wall-mirror is a useful aid for boxers to perform shadow boxing drills, and to check their stance and technique (Picture 7.1). The boxer’s image provides instant feedback about what the opponent would see during a match.</p>

*Note: Although most clubs will supply bag gloves, headgears, and other pieces of training and protective equipment, the boxer should be encouraged to use his/her own (see The Boxer's Equipment section in Chapter 3).*

**Picture 7.1-** A group of boxers using a mirror for shadow boxing. Each athlete is positioned so he or she can have a clear view of himself or herself performing boxing-specific movements.



## 7.3- Structure of a Training Session

### Roles and Responsibilities of Apprentice Coaches

During the early stages of their involvement with a Club, Apprentice Coaches are *not* expected to be responsible for the *planning* of the boxing program, or even of specific boxing sessions. This should be the responsibility of the Head Club Coach.

However, Apprentice Coaches must be familiar with the *structure* and the *components* of a well-organized session, as well as with the *general characteristics* of the activities that should be offered in each part of the session. This information will help them to effectively implement and manage the activities they are responsible for.

*Note: Before the session begins, the head Coach or the Apprentice Coach should always:*

- *Inspect the gym, and check the equipment for defects*
- *Organize the equipment*
- *Greet each athlete*
- *Assess the energy level of each athlete*

### The Parts of the Session and the General Characteristics of the Activities

Table 7.2 shows the *structure* and the *components* of a well-organized session, as well as the *general characteristics* of the activities that should be offered in each part. These aspects are discussed extensively in the NCCP Multisport module entitled *Planning a Practice*.

Sample exercises and games that can be used for a Boxing warm-up are listed in tables 7.3 to 7.5.

### Order of the Activities in the Main part of the Session

Often, the main part of a session will feature several activities aimed at developing a variety of skills or athletic abilities.

Paying attention to the **order** in which these activities are scheduled in the main part of the practice increases the probability of achieving the desired training goals.

Some general guidelines to that effect are offered in table 7.6.

**Table 7.2-** Structure of a Training Session and General Characteristics of the Activities.

<b>Structure of a Training Session and Key Elements of Each Part</b>	
<b>1- INTRODUCTION</b>	<p><b>Duration:</b> variable, but short (2-3 minutes).</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to greet athletes and let them know what will be taking place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Review the goals of the practice and the activities planned</li> <li>➤ Give general safety instructions regarding the activities planned</li> </ul>
<b>2- WARM-UP</b>	<p><b>Duration:</b> 10 to 15 minutes, depending on the length of the session</p> <p><i>Note: A longer warm-up may be necessary if very high-intensity efforts will be performed in the main part.</i></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to prepare the body for the demands of the main part. The warm-up should be in two parts:</p> <p><b>General warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ General, dynamic exercises or games to loosen muscles and raise body temperature</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Stretching to improve flexibility is <u>not</u> recommended for warming-up as muscles are not yet warm</i></p> <p><b>Boxing-specific warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Brief activities that athletes already know that mimic some movements that will be performed in the main part (may even be the same activity, but at lower intensity)</li> <li>➤ A gradual increase in intensity that will not tire the athletes</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: There should be a quick transition between the end of the warm-up, the explanations/instructions given for the first activities of the main part, and the activities themselves</i></p>
<b>3- MAIN PART</b>	<p><b>Duration:</b> Variable; usually 30-60 minutes, or more</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to engage athletes in activities that will help them to improve skills and fitness.</p> <p>3 or more activities linked in the proper order (see suggestions in table 7.3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Activities that challenge the athletes so that they can learn and improve while enjoying themselves</li> <li>➤ Athletes engaged most of the time in an activity (i.e. not standing around or waiting in line)</li> <li>➤ Athletes allowed lots of practice for each activity</li> <li>➤ Activities that are adapted to the age, fitness, and ability levels of the athletes</li> </ul>
<b>4- COOL-DOWN</b>	<p><b>Duration:</b> 5-10 minutes</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to initiate the recovery process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A gradual decrease in intensity</li> <li>➤ Stretching, especially of those muscles most used during the session</li> </ul>
<b>5- CONCLUSION</b>	<p><b>Duration:</b> 3-5 minutes</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to debrief and inform about next practice or competition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide and ask for feedback on what went well and suggest how improvement can be made</li> <li>➤ Inform about the next practice or competition (e.g. logistics, goals and emphasis)</li> <li>➤ Lead team cheer</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: The coach should speak with each athlete before he/she leaves.</i></p>

**Table 7.3-** Sample Activities for the General Warm-Up. \*: Good for balance and/or coordination

General Warm-Up: must be done first	Examples of Activities/Exercises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running (1); *running backwards; cycling (2) or stationary cycling (3); *running on place: knees are raised progressively higher, with leg movements performed progressively faster (4)</li> <li>• *Kick backs (5)</li> <li>• *Walking in the crouch position (6)</li> <li>• *Jumping jacks (7)</li> <li>• Side lunges, bent forward position with torso twists and arms movements (8)</li> <li>• Forward lunge and arm extension (9)</li> <li>• *Cross lateral knee and elbow contacts (10)</li> <li>• *Trunk flexions and twists while standing on one leg (11)</li> <li>• Clock wise and anti clock wise rotations: head/neck (12; 13); shoulders (14, 15); *trunk (16); * leg (17), ankles (18)</li> <li>• *Rope skipping; *rope skipping while running on place with progressively higher knee elevation.</li> </ul>	

**Table 7.4-** Example of a game that can be used as part of the warm-up.

Name and Purpose	Equipment needed and organization	Instructions, activity management, and variations
<p><b>Name of Activity:</b> Flag game</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Development of footwork, utilizing the in/out movement</p> <p><b>Note:</b> This game can also be used as a talent identification drill with young, beginner boxers, as it can reveal natural abilities such as coordination, quickness, hand-eye coordination, and decision-making.</p> <p>As boxers progress forward with the structured teaching of footwork, this game will be a good way of assessing whether they master basic footwork skills.</p>	<p><b>Equipment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large surface that can accommodate several square zones of 5 feet by 5 feet each.</li> <li>• Cones should be used to mark out each zone.</li> <li>• Flags 2 x 16 inches. If flags are not available, 16-inch ropes can be used</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants are paired.</li> <li>• Each participant is provided with one flag.</li> <li>• Each pair is assigned to one of the 5 feet by 5 feet area marked off by cones.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> The working areas can be located next to each other. When in the ring there will be a third person, a referee, that may at some point represent an obstacle; for this reason, young boxers should learn to cope with limited space or unexpected obstructions.</p>	<p><b>Instructions to the participants:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants insert their flags into their trunks at the waist, and on the side.</li> <li>• Flags must hang out about 30 cm outside a participant’s trunks. They must flow loosely as the boxers move around, and be easy to “steal”.</li> <li>• The intent of the game is to take as many flags as possible away from the other participant during the allocated time for each “period” or “round”.</li> <li>• Each “round” should last between 1 and 2 minutes, and the number of rounds should vary between 2 and 4 depending on the age and fitness level of the participants. There should be a 30 to 60 second break between rounds.</li> <li>• Both boxers must square off in the centre of their assigned area. They must face each other in a competition stance, remain upright, and never lean over.</li> <li>• Each round begins and ends when the coach gives a signal (e.g. whistle blow).</li> <li>• Each round, boxers alternate the hip that is placed closest to the opponent.</li> </ul> <p><b>Management- During the activity, Coaches must ensure that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flags are properly tucked into participants’ trunks.</li> <li>• Participants remain in their upright boxing stance. This will avoid boxers hitting heads together.</li> <li>• The beginning and end of each round are clearly signalled.</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 to 3 coaches are ideal to supervise this activity. Each coach is assigned an area of the gym to supervise.</li> <li>• Anyone can do this drill, but participants should be paired according to size, skill and fitness levels.</li> </ul> <p><b>Variations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first participant to steal 10 flag wins.</li> <li>• The winner counts out a predetermined number of exercises the losing partner must perform (push ups, sit ups, chin ups, etc ).</li> <li>• If it is tied at the end of the round, both participants perform a predetermined number of push ups, sit ups, chin ups, etc before the next round begins.</li> <li>• Have the flags hanging behind the back.</li> <li>• For first timers to this game it is a good idea to plan for shorter rounds, until they acquire the skills and endurance to sustain the drill for 2 min or more.</li> </ul>

**Table 7.5-** Sample activities for the Boxing specific warm-up. \*: Good for balance and/or coordination

<b>Specific Warm-Up - Key points</b>	<b>Examples of Activities/Exercises</b>
<p>The specific warm-up follows the general warm-up. It must involve movements that are very similar or identical to those performed while boxing.</p> <p>The first few exercises of the specific warm-up should be executed in a controlled manner, and at a sub-maximal speed or intensity.</p> <p>Speed of movements should be increased progressively within a given exercise, and from one exercise to the next if it involves the same muscles.</p> <p>At the end of the specific warm-up, movements should be performed at the speed/intensity intended for the main part of the session.</p> <p>It is very important to ensure a proper warm-up for the upper body musculature: neck, shoulders, trunk, back, chest, and core.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrist, arms, and shoulder rotations (see table 7.3 for some examples).</li> <li>• From the basic stance position, slow extensions of the arms in front of the body, as in straight punching. Right and left arms alternate. Cadence is increased progressively but remains sub-maximal.</li> <li>• * Running on place while performing extensions of the arms in front of the body, as in straight punching. Cadence is increased progressively but remains sub-maximal.</li> <li>• * Same as above, but running backwards.</li> <li>• From the basic stance position, extensions of the arms <i>across</i> the body, as in punching to the left with the right hand, or vice versa. Controlled trunk rotation and stretch at the end of the movement, and return to the initial position. Movements are performed to the right and left alternatively. Cadence is increased progressively, but remains sub-maximal.</li> <li>• Standing in the upright position, feet shoulder width apart. (1) arms are extended on each side of the body with palms facing forward; (2) both elbows are bent at 90°; (3) hands make fist so knuckles are pointing up and palms facing forward. In this position, arms are extended towards the ceiling alternatively, as in punching straight up. Cadence is increased progressively but remains sub-maximal.</li> <li>• Same as above, but using a light resistance in each hand.</li> <li>• Footwork drills (ex. toe fencing with hands together behind the back. See Section 5.3).</li> <li>• Individual shadow boxing on place. The Boxing stance is assumed and the boxer executes various types of punches with each hand.</li> <li>• Individual shadow boxing with short steps forward, backwards, or laterally, using effective footwork technique.</li> <li>• Shadow boxing while following the movements of a group leader.</li> </ul>

**Table 7.6-** Optimal Order of the Activities in the Main Part of the Session.

<b>EARLY IN THE MAIN PART OF THE SESSION ...</b>
Athletes are not fatigued, so try to plan for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Activities to acquire <b>new</b> techniques, skills, or motor patterns.</li><li>• Activities to <b>refine</b> techniques, skills, or motor patterns already acquired.</li><li>• Activities that develop or require coordination or balance.</li><li>• Activities that develop or require speed.</li></ul>
<b>THEN CONSIDER ...</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Activities to develop or require speed-endurance.</li><li>• Activities to develop or require strength.</li><li>• Activities to develop or require strength-endurance.</li></ul>
<b>LATER IN THE MAIN PART OF THE SESSION ...</b>
Athletes may be more fatigued, so try to plan for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Activities to consolidate skills already acquired (i.e. make the athlete capable of executing them correctly even when tired).</li><li>• Activities that develop or require aerobic endurance.</li><li>• Activities to develop flexibility.</li></ul>

## **7.4- Training Young, Beginner Boxers: Reminders**

Boxing clubs should make every effort to offer programs that are adapted to the specific needs of young boxers, and that are consistent with the long-term athlete development principles outlined in Chapter 2.

This means that, even when they are involved in Boxing programs, young athletes should be provided with opportunities to acquire and to develop a variety of general and sport-specific skills. In addition, what gets emphasized in the young participants' programs should vary according to their age and sport background:

1. All-around motor skills to improve balance, coordination, and agility should be emphasized with younger participants aged 9 and below. Older participants should also work on these important athletic abilities, particularly if they were not exposed to a variety of motor development and sport experiences earlier in their lives.
2. General sport skills such as running, jumping, throwing, and catching should then be progressively emphasized, while continuing and refining the all-around motor development.
3. Once the participant has a solid general athletic foundation, basic boxing skills can then be introduced.

As was emphasized in Chapter 2 on LTAD, skill learning and development must occur in a fun and enjoyable environment; otherwise children will likely not remain involved in the sport for long.

Coaches should also appreciate that the child or the young adolescent's boxing program requires a completely different approach to that of the dedicated competitor or aspiring elite boxer. It is therefore both inappropriate and ineffective in the long-term to involve young participants in adult-type boxing activities.

## **7.5- Developing General Motor Skills**

This section outlines key principles that should be followed to develop balance, coordination, and agility. Examples of activities and exercises are also provided. Some of these activities can be used during the warm-up.

Additional exercises will be described in detail in the supplementary document entitled "General and specific exercises for young boxers" that Boxing Canada is currently in the process of developing.

## Balance

To improve balance, the athlete should perform activities where:

- Unusual or difficult positions must be assumed and maintained for some time.



**Picture 7.2-** Standing upright on one foot.



**Picture 7.3-** Bending forward while standing on one foot.

OR

- Familiar movements are performed in unusual *positions* (e.g. walking backwards or in a “squatted” position) or *conditions* (e.g. walking on a narrow beam; standing on one foot with the eyes closed, walking backwards with the eyes closed; etc.)

OR

- Balance is challenged by external factors, in such a way that an effort is required to stabilize the body and maintain balance during the execution of specific movements.

The use of large exercise balls (known as Swiss or stability balls), balance boards, or other pieces of equipment such as half-round foam rollers or BOSU balls may increase significantly the stability requirements when performing certain exercises. This can help athletes improve their balance and, to some degree, their coordination as well.



**Picture 7.4-** Swiss or Balance ball.



**Picture 7.5-** Foam rollers (round and half-round).



**Picture 7.6-** Balance board



**Picture 7.7-** Balance board equipped with a roller.

Two types of balance boards: the one to the left (Picture 7.6) creates a balance challenge in all directions, the other (Picture 7.7) primarily from side to side.



**Picture 7.8-** BOSU ball.

BOSU balls can be used to do specific balance drills (picture 7.9), but they can also be used when performing certain resistance training exercises (Pictures 7.10 to 7.12). In the latter case, the extra challenge may not only represent a very effective way of improving balance, but it also serves to overload specific muscle groups that are responsible for maintaining a proper body position when boxing.



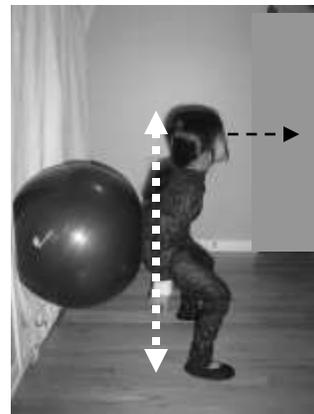
**Picture 7.9-** Standing on one foot on a BOSU ball.



**Picture 7.10-** Performing a squat on a balance board.



**Picture 7.11-** Performing a squat with each foot on a small balance board.



**Picture 7.12-** Performing a squat while rolling a Swiss ball with the back.

Working harder to maintain a stable body position when performing a particular exercise does several things for an athlete's balance:

1. It promotes the ongoing involvement of specific muscles in the legs, feet and core that serve to stabilize the body, teaches them to work together, and helps to strengthen them.
2. It trains the proprioceptors in the joints and muscles. Proprioceptors convey information relevant for posture from the musculoskeletal system to the brain. Balance training enhances the response of these receptors, which helps the athlete maintain a proper body position during exercise without the need for conscious control.
3. It forces the athlete to *look ahead* while performing the exercise, not *down at the ground*; this helps the athlete to use and to process visual clues to remain balanced.

## Coordination

To improve coordination, activities must involve a sequence of movements that are to be performed in a given order.

- The level of difficulty of activities used to develop coordination depends mainly on the *number* of movements that must be performed in a row, how *familiar* the sequence is to the performer, the *speed* at which each movement must be performed, as well as the *number of movements that must be executed within a given time* (ex.: once every second).
- Movement sequences can be designed for specific body parts (e.g., arms only), for several body parts at a time, or for the entire body (e.g. squat thrust movement). Coordination activities can also take the form of agility games (e.g., follow the leader).
- The general guidelines below should be followed when designing activities aimed at improving coordination:
  1. Athletes must perform movements correctly, as the neuromuscular system learns the motor patterns athletes *actually perform*. For this reason, it is important to start with movements performed at low speed or intensity and to *progress* to full speed.
  2. It's a good idea to create conditions that require athletes to perform movements in various directions or to use their weaker side.
  3. Activities can be made more challenging by adding the following variations gradually, after the basic sequence has been mastered:
    - Increase the speed of execution
    - Add new movements to the sequence
    - Modify the order in which movements are performed
    - Combine various actions already mastered, but perform them in an unusual manner (e.g., dribble a ball while squatting)
    - Add restrictions or constraints (e.g., less time, less space, less stable environment)
    - Add uncertainty (e.g., perform the action with the eyes closed)
- Activities specifically used to enhance coordination should be performed when the athlete is not tired from other forms of training.
- It is preferable to do short training sessions for motor abilities more often than to do long sessions separated by several days. For example, two 5-minute sessions four times a week are likely to be more effective for motor learning than one 40-minute session once a week.

## 7.6- Developing General Sport Skills

Young boxers should be strongly encouraged to participate in a wide range of sports to acquire and to refine a variety of skills. Such sports include hockey, most ball games (including soccer for improving control and coordination of the feet), skating, skiing, swimming and other aquatic sports, gymnastics, racquet sports, etc. Even though some of these sports are not necessarily highly “specific” to Boxing, they will nonetheless foster a balanced over-all athletic development in the participants, which is important in a long-term approach.

## 7.7- Teaching Boxing Skills

### What to Teach, and in Which Sequence

The Boxing skills that should be taught to young boxers during the early stages of their development are listed in the tables 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 of Chapter 2: *Long-Term Athlete Development*.

Key points concerning organisation, explanation/instruction, observation, activity management and feedback are outlined in Chapter 4: *Teaching Principles and Guidelines*.

Basic Boxing skills are described in detail in Chapter 5. The *optimal sequence* in which these skills should be taught is also outlined throughout Chapter 5, as skills are presented in the *recommended order* a beginner should learn them.

**Important note:** *At no time should a boxer be exposed to an attack for which he/she has not been taught an adequate defence.*

### Progressions When Teaching Punches

In this section, a series of *progressions* are proposed for teaching the basic punch techniques. For the mechanics and the specific aspects pertaining to the *execution* of the various types of punches, refer to the appropriate sections of Chapter 5.

1. The proper mechanics of the movement should first be learned in *controlled and easy conditions*, with the boxer practicing the technique individually and at slow speed. At this stage the boxer normally receives feedback and comments from the coach, or from a partner. Gloves are not worn at this stage.
2. Then, the boxer should perform the movements *at progressively higher speeds* in front of a mirror. At this stage, he or she still works alone.
3. Depending on the type of punch, the boxer can then move on to a heavy bag, bean bag, or wall bag, and perform various repetitions of the punch in controlled conditions, varying the speed/power of the blows. On the wall and heavy bags, the target of each punch can also be varied. Gloves are worn at this stage.
4. When the boxer has a reasonably good mastery of the technique for that particular punch, he or she can work with a partner. *At this stage, all blows should be aimed at the palm of the gloved guarding hand of the partner.* Both boxers should wear their protective equipment for this type of exercise, as they should alternate roles. Alternatively, the punch can be practiced with the coach or the partner using focus pads.
5. The boxer should then progress to learning the appropriate defensive moves against the punching technique he or she has learned (see next section for more details).

### **Progressions When Teaching the Defence Against a Particular Punch**

In this section, a series of *progressions* are proposed for the teaching of the defence against a particular type of punch. For the mechanics and the specific aspects pertaining to the *execution* of specific defensive moves, refer to the appropriate sections of Chapter 5.

1. The proper mechanics of the movement should first be learned in controlled and easy conditions, with the boxer practicing the technique individually and at slow speed. At this stage the boxer normally receives feedback and comments from the coach, or from a partner.
2. The boxer should then practice the technique in stable and predictable conditions, with a partner executing the punch at a slow, controlled speed. At this stage, the defending boxer should know what the target of the punch will be *before* the attacker executes it. At this stage the head must be completely excluded from the target area.
3. The speed of the attacker's movements should then be increased progressively, but the defending boxer should still know what the target of the punch will be before the attacker executes it. At this stage the head must continue to be excluded from the target area.
4. Some elements of uncertainty can then be progressively added in the attack (e.g. the defender does not know when it will take place, or what the target will be). At this stage the head must still be excluded from the target area, and the speed of the attack must be controlled, i.e. not maximal.
5. When the boxer's defence is deemed sufficiently stable and effective against a particular punch, the head of the defender can be included as a possible target, but attacks to this part of the body should be done at controlled, less than maximal speed. Initially, the defender should also know when the attacker will attempt a blow at the head.
6. Elements of uncertainty can then be added as above.
7. When this type of progression has been followed, the attacker can punch at full speed and the defender should be in a position to counter his or her moves effectively. However, the attacker must always be prepared to stop if he or she realizes that the partner cannot cope with the attack.

### **Using the Right Type of Gloves**

- For youngsters, the gloves used should be 8 to 10 oz. No purpose is served by using gloves that are too heavy for the arms of the young boxer, as this makes the correct execution of the skill unnecessarily difficult. Heavy gloves only encourage swinging and a corresponding neglect of the proper mechanics of the skill.

## 7.8- Skill Analysis

### Introduction

One of the most important roles the Coach plays in providing support to an athlete is the *analysis of his or her performance*. Performance analysis should occur *before* the coach makes an intervention. Analyzing the athlete's performance allows the coach to:

- (1) detect possible technical or tactical errors,
- (2) identify the potential causes of such errors,
- (3) rank potential causes in order of priority for intervention,
- (4) select and implement appropriate corrective measures
- (5) decide what type of intervention is best suited, and how best to provide feedback

### Skill Analysis Process

In the case of Apprentice Coaches, performance analysis will focus on basic Boxing skills, and the interventions will be limited to the key technical factors. A more comprehensive performance analysis model will be presented during the Club Coach workshop.

Table 7.7 outlines a process for effective analyses and correction of skills.

Tables 7.8 to 7.11 present an application of the skill analysis and skill correction processes for the following Boxing techniques:

- Boxing Stance
- Basic Footwork
- Jab to the Head
- Defence Against the Jab to the Head

**Table 7.7-** A Process for Analyzing and Correcting Skills

<b>Steps</b>	<b>Purpose of this step, and key points</b>
<b>Step 1: Have a clear picture of what the desired performance should be</b>	The coach must <i>know what the desired outcome</i> of the performance should be. In other words, the Coach must know exactly <i>what</i> the athlete should do in order to perform the skill effectively, and <i>how</i> this should be done. This information becomes the point of reference or the <i>referent</i> used by the Coach in the analysis. The information presented throughout Chapter 5 represents a series of referents for specific Boxing skills.
<b>Step 2: Observe the athlete's performance</b>	The Coach must observe the performance from an appropriate vantage point, in order to see clearly the various components of the skill(s) being executed by the athlete.
<b>Step 3: Compare the athlete's performance with the referent</b>	As he or she observes the performance, the Coach makes a <i>mental comparison</i> between (1) what the athlete is actually doing and (2) the "referent" for the skill in question, i.e. what a "good performance" should be.
<b>Step 4: Decide whether or not to make an intervention *</b>	As the Coach compares the athlete's performance with the referent (i.e. the "desired performance"), he or she must answer the following question:  <i>"Does the gap between the athlete's performance and the referent justify an intervention"?</i>  and make a judgment call. If the answer is "no" or "not yet", then the coach should not intervene, and the athlete should continue to practice. However, if the answer is "yes", then an intervention should be made.
<b>Step 5: Select and implement corrective measures</b>	In the last step of this basic skill analysis process, the coach selects the appropriate corrective measure(s), and decides how best to implement them. For instance: what should the athlete do to improve skill execution; how can the activity be modified or adjusted to allow the athlete to succeed; what type of intervention is best suited; how best to provide feedback.

\* The key question is, of course, "*When does the gap reach the critical point that makes a coaching intervention necessary?*" There are no easy answers here, and it is only with experience that Coaches will get to learn "where to draw the line", and establish their own "threshold for intervention". However, as a general rule, coaches should intervene when:

- 1) The safety of the participant may be at risk. In this case, the activity the boxer is involved in should be stopped immediately.
- 2) Fundamental aspects of the skills are missing, or incorrectly executed.
- 3) Behaviours that can lead to "bad habits" are repeated over and over by the boxer.

**Table 7.8 – Skill Analysis and Correction Grid: Boxing Stance**

**Desired outcome:** Boxer can maintain balance at all times to ensure that he or she can defend or attack in static and dynamic (pendulum movements) positions.

Key points about the skill	Common errors	Technical corrective measures
<p><b>Lower body position</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing position with feet shoulder width apart</li> <li>• Body weight is evenly distributed between both feet (centered)</li> <li>• Rear heel is raised and should be offset from the midline of body</li> <li>• Both knees are slightly flexed with the rear knee flexed at a greater angle than the front knee.</li> <li>• Feet are offset at approx 45° in relation to the opponent.</li> </ul>	<p>Athlete unable to maintain precision or consistency in assuming the correct stance.</p> <p>One or more key performance factors is deficient (see left column). For instance, the stance may be too wide – this will inhibit movement ability.</p>	<p>Use demonstrations to reinforce appropriate key factor.</p> <p>Provide feedback explaining key factor enabling the boxer to progress further with the skill.</p>
<p><b>Shoulder position</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The trunk should be kept as upright as possible with the front shoulder slightly elevated to protect the chin.</li> </ul>	<p>The athlete assumes a correct stance in the static position, but cannot maintain the correct stance while moving.</p>	<p>Place athlete in front of a mirror, so he or she can see his or her body position, and experience what the correct position should “feel” like.</p>
<p><b>Head position</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be still with the boxer watching his opponent “through the eyebrows” to avoid lifting his or her chin.</li> </ul>		<p>Begin by focusing on the position of the lower body and ensure athlete is positioned correctly.</p>
<p><b>Hand position.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The forward hand is carried at shoulder height in the same plane that will enable boxer to pivot and punch, with the knuckles loosely clenched, and turned slightly inwards.</li> <li>• The rear hand is offset from the collar bone, with palm slightly open for catching yet ever ready for punching</li> <li>• Wrist straight for both hands.</li> <li>• Both elbows should be comfortably tucked in to protect the ribs</li> </ul>		<p>Then, while maintaining the proper lower body position, work on shoulders, head, and then hand position.</p>

**Table 7.9 – Skill Analysis and Correction Grid: Basic Footwork**

**Desired outcome:** Boxer can advance, retreat, move laterally and circle in all directions to achieve a balanced position in which to attack or defend.

Key points about the skill	Common errors	Technical corrective measures
<p><b>Advancing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The foot movements should be short, one foot being in contact with the floor at all times. Pushing off with the ball of the back foot, slide the front foot forward bringing the back foot up quickly into the original stance position.</li> </ul>	<p>One or more key performance factors is deficient (see left column).</p> <p>Incorrect stance to begin with.</p>	<p>Use demo to reinforce appropriate key factor.</p> <p>Explain key factor enabling the boxer to progress further with the skill.</p> <p>Adjust or simplify activity to ensure key factor is performed successfully.</p>
<p><b>Retreating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Push off the ball of the front foot, the rear foot takes a slightly longer sliding pace back than in the equivalent forward movement. The front foot slides into position to maintain the balanced stance.</li> </ul>	<p>Proper stance is not maintained when moving.</p> <p>Boxer unable to maintain precision or consistency when executing the skill.</p>	<p>Ensure proper stance throughout.</p> <p>Have the boxer go through various footwork drills to improve coordination and agility.</p>
<p><b>Moving right (Lateral / Circling)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Push off of left foot while right foot shuffles laterally. To circle, the right foot rotates slightly counter clockwise and the left foot is slid back into boxing stance.</li> </ul>	<p>Boxer crosses legs.</p> <p>Boxers hops while moving.</p>	<p>Work on the athlete’s balance (see guidelines in Section 7.5).</p>
<p><b>Moving left (Lateral / Circling)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Push off of right foot, while left foot shuffles laterally. To circle, the left foot rotates slightly clockwise and the right foot is slid back into boxing stance.</li> </ul>		<p>Have the boxer focus on keeping the knees flexed, and on sliding the feet when moving.</p>

**Table 7.10 – Skill Analysis and Correction Grid: Jab to the Head (attack)**

**Desired outcome:** Boxer attacks / engages opponent while maintaining range / distance to put defender in a vulnerable position to enable opportunities to score points (connect) with dominant hand.

The skill may be observed in technical sparring, bag work or focus pads, or technical drills with a partner

Key points about the skill	Common errors	Technical corrective measures
<p>The Boxer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims for the opponent’s head with the back knuckles</li> <li>• Points the knuckles down by slightly flexing wrist</li> <li>• Snaps the jabbing arm with a slight pivot at hip and shoulder</li> <li>• Rotates forearm inward in the last third of the distance to the target</li> <li>• Slides front foot forward before impact</li> <li>• Guards chin with dominant hand with elbow tucked in to protect the body</li> <li>• Retracts the jabbing hand quickly along the same path as the delivery</li> <li>• Ensures proper footwork to maintain a balanced stance</li> <li>• Recognizes opportunity to continue attack or retreat</li> </ul>	<p>One or more key performance factors is deficient (see left column).</p> <p>Incorrect stance to begin with.</p> <p>Chin too high.</p> <p>Proper stance is not maintained when executing the jab.</p> <p>Boxer unable to maintain precision or consistency when executing the jab.</p> <p>Boxer lowers his or her rear guard. Chin not protected with dominant hand.</p> <p>Jabbing shoulder too low.</p> <p>Stance and footwork fails or is not maintained (i.e. front leg straightens).</p> <p>Incorrect knuckle position on contact.</p>	<p>Use demo to reinforce appropriate key factor.</p> <p>Explain key factor enabling the boxer to progress further with the skill.</p> <p>Adjust or simplify activity to ensure key factor is performed successfully.</p> <p>Work on maintaining a proper stance throughout.</p> <p>Have the boxer go through various footwork drills to improve coordination and agility.</p> <p>Work on the athlete’s balance (see guidelines in Section 7.5).</p>

**Table 7.11 – Skill Analysis and Correction Grid: Defence Against the Jab to the Head**

**Desired outcomes:**

**Block:** Boxer protects head by using the palm of dominant hand to intercept opponent punch (jab) and avoid getting hit or scored upon.

**Parry:** Boxer protects head by using dominant hand to direct opponent’s punch (jab) away from the scoring area.

Skill may be observed in technical sparring, work on focus pads, or technical drills with a partner.

Key points about the skill	Common errors	Technical corrective measures
<p><b>Block – The Boxer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moves his or her dominant hand from guard and rotates it outwards with the palm facing opposition jab.</li> <li>• Intercepts the opposing jab in the open palm of dominant hand.</li> <li>• Keeps the forearm rigid so that the glove is not forced back into the face.</li> <li>• Keeps glove close to chin during interception.</li> <li>• Ensures proper footwork and maintains a balanced stance.</li> <li>• Recognizes opportunity to counter attack or to retreat.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Both Block and Parry:</b></p> <p>Athlete unable to maintain precision or consistency when executing skill.</p> <p>One or more key performance factors is deficient (see left column).</p> <p>Head throws back / flinch / head moves up.</p> <p>Stance and footwork fails or is not maintained (i.e balance shifts too far to rear leg).</p>	<p>Use demo to reinforce appropriate key factor.</p> <p>Explain key factor enabling the boxer to progress further with the skill.</p> <p>Apply defence teaching progression principles (see Chapter 7 of Reference Material). Reduce speed of attack to ensure key factor is performed successfully.</p> <p>Work on maintaining a proper stance and footwork throughout, to enable effective block or counter punch.</p>
<p><b>Parry - The Boxer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows the opposing jab to within a fraction of the target</li> <li>• With a slight pivot, moves the forearm and rigid palm of the rear hand across the body to deflect the jab.</li> <li>• Deflects at the opposing wrist</li> <li>• Ensures the parry remains in center line, with minimal movement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parry:</b></p> <p>Over rotation of pivot / over extension of parry hand / ineffective redirect of opponent punch.</p>	<p>Have the boxer go through various footwork drills to improve coordination and agility.</p> <p>Work on the athlete’s balance (see guidelines in Section 7 of the Reference Material).</p>

## 7.9- Using Pads Effectively in the Gym

by Peter Wylie

### What are pads?

Pads are mitts that fit on the hands of the coach. They come in many styles. Generally, they are oval shaped with a flat surface, and marked with a white circle in the center of the pad. In recent years, manufacturers have come out with pads that have a concave mitt section that is of a better design than the traditional mitts used in the past. There are also pads which combine a real pad and boxing glove.

Some coaches do not use either type of pads, and prefer to use a pair of boxing gloves. This allows them to throw punches at the boxers, and reduce chances of cuts or abrasions that may result from accidental contact with the edges of the traditional type pads.

### Type of work that can be done with pads, and benefits of this method

The terms “focus pads”, “target pads”, “punch mitts” etc. that are often used to describe “pads” reflect the various methods and styles in using them. In the hands of an experienced, fluid and moving coach, pads can be a very effective tool to refine the boxer’s technique. To the observer, a well-lead pad session is a little bit like watching a fine dance couple working together in unison, and producing a rhythmic practice of technical skills which is very close to actual sparring or to competition. However, in the hands of an inexperienced coach, the effect can be quite different, and the results even counter productive.

Since the mid 1990s, the pads have become one of the most valuable training means in boxing gyms around the world. With the experienced coach working the pads, workouts can range from being extremely exhaustive and demanding to being an extensive skill lesson in which either basic or more complex skills can be developed.

The main reason why a pad workout can be so valuable is that the coach, being so close to the boxer, can provide him or her with immediate and regular feedback (*Note: refer to Chapter 4 for some specific information about how to provide effective feedback*). This is obviously very effective for correcting technical flaws and improving skills, regardless of the level the boxer is at. Pad work builds on timing, eye hand coordination, and punching accuracy. It also contributes to the development of boxing skills such as punching in combination, remaining in balance, moving effectively around the opponent, etc. Because pad work can have demands that are similar to actual sparring, the athlete can also work on his or her decision-making and improve reaction time to certain cues.

Fairly rapid improvements can be made by the boxer who has access to quality pad sessions, making this a time-efficient method in the process of developing skills. This method is therefore particularly effective with young boxers, because it allows the coach to monitor the development of each athlete on an on-going basis. For instance, the coach can set individualized goals for the athletes in areas such as punches and defensive tactics, and with the advantage of one on one work, carefully supervise the rate at which the athlete is progressing, while making adjustments as necessary.

### How to use pads in the boxer's program

Below are some key points coaches should know about the use of pads:

- Pad work may focus on skill development or refinement, but it can also be used for punching power. In this case, the coach must be extremely concentrated at all times in order to avoid injuries to himself or herself.
- The boxer should always wear gloves when involved in a workout with pads.
- When using pads to instruct technical skills, the coach should select only one type of punch (e.g., the jab and its variations), and concentrate on this particular aspect during the pad session.
- Coaches must always keep in mind that, for every offensive tactic, the appropriate defensive skills must also be taught.
- Pad work should always be viewed as quality work. Coaches should therefore try to do work with pads *early* in the training session, when the boxers are not fatigued, and are therefore most alert and able to execute skills correctly and at high speed.
- Regardless of the level they are at, many boxers seek pad work daily from coaches, and are often upset or disappointed when they do not have the opportunity to do so. Both athletes and coaches must know that pad work is not necessary every day, and that it should be incorporated in a planned and purposeful manner into the boxer's programming. For instance:
  - When the boxer attends the gym in the general preparation period, the pads can be used once a week, with the emphasis being on endurance or technical improvement.
  - As the competing boxer moves on to the sport-specific phase of his or her program, pads become more important and should be used on a much more regular basis for technical work.
  - In the final preparation phase for a competition, pad work is essential due to its highly specific nature, and periods of work should be set aside with the coach every time the boxer is in the gym. The duration of each workout with pads should be shortened during the final preparation leading to a competition.

### **Caution for coaches**

- Boxers should be cautioned about the power they are delivering their blows prior to working on the pads. There were many instances of the coaches being injured by novice and also by experienced boxers who either delivered pushing type or misdirected powerful punches. Boxers should be informed about the dangers of throwing these types of punches, which could cause hyper extension injuries both to them and the coach. This is especially the case in younger, inexperienced athletes.
- It is important that the athlete should know that the technical aspect of working with pads outweighs the power factor when working on skills. It is no necessary for a boxer to punch too hard when working on pads, unless the coach is prepared along with the boxer to work at this level.
- It is important that the athlete should know that, when doing work with pads, the technical and skill aspects far outweigh the power factor. It is no necessary for a boxer to punch hard when working on pads, unless the coach specifically asks him or her to do so.

### **Common mistakes**

- Many coaches hold the pads too far apart from each other. Remember that there is only one target if the punches are delivered to the chin, so there is no point in presenting two targets to the boxer. This is especially important when practicing combination with straight punches and hooks.
- Coaches must make sure that all the punches are thrown to the same spot. If one pad is extended too far forward, all hooks will be too short and will never hit the target during the actual bout. This also creates bad habits which will be difficult to correct later on in the heat of a fight.

### **Practical tips for coaches**

- For the pad work, a novice boxer should wear the shorts, not pants. This will allow the coach to observe the position of the athlete's feet and knees positioning, and correct inadequacies.
- When working pads, coaches should always begin with the basics of boxing, and then increase gradually the level of technical difficulties. The coach should always have an objective to achieve, and pads should not be used simply to please a boxer.
- Unless the coach specifically asks for it, the boxer should never hit hard on the pads. Boxers can hit a heavy bag as hard as they want, but when working pads they have to follow the coach's instructions.

## Boxing Canada - Apprentice Coach Reference Material

- The coach should force the boxer to keep moving. This will improve his/her footwork and mobility while hitting.
- The coach must create only one target, except in the case of the combination, which includes the punches to the body and to the chin.
- Protect yourself all the time.
- Do not overdo pad work with a few individuals; there are so many boxers who need, want to do, pad work with the coach.



**Picture 7.13-** Experienced coach leading a pad session.



## **CHAPTER 8— THE DUTIES OF THE SECOND DURING A COMPETITION**

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the key roles and responsibilities of the Second during Boxing competitions.

### **8.1- Introduction**

During a competition, a boxer can be supported by two persons on the ring side. Typically, these individuals are the Coach, and his or her assistant. The person who assists the Coach during a fight is referred-to as the “Second”.

Apprentice Coaches will often be involved as “Seconds” during competitions, and they must therefore be familiar with the key roles and responsibilities of this position.

### **8.2- Roles and Duties of the Second**

#### **General Points**

The principal duty of the Second is to see that the boxer gets the necessary relaxation and aid during the intervals between the rounds.

The Second must therefore remain calm and project a reassuring attitude at all times. He or she must also be well organized, and time efficient when performing his or her duties because of the limited time available between rounds (1 minute).

During the fight, the Second will often talk with the Coach, and discuss how the boxer and the opponent are doing. However, the Second should keep in mind that the person ultimately in charge is the Coach, and adopt a professional and proper attitude at all times with regards to the technical decisions or interventions made by the Coach. Similarly, the Second must always have a respectful attitude towards the referee.

### **Equipment Used by the Second**

The Second typically uses the following equipment when providing support to a boxer:

- Thin rubber gloves to protect himself/herself and the boxer against infections. This is an important safety precaution, as the hands of the Seconds may become in contact with body fluids, blood, or open wounds. New gloves should be used after each fight.
- A bucket filled with fresh water. The bucket must be cleaned and disinfected before being used with another boxer.
- A towel. Each boxer should have a clean, personal towel clearly identified.
- A jug of cold water or sport drink, as per the boxer's personal preferences.
- A water bottle made of unbreakable material. Each boxer should have a clean, personal bottle clearly identified. The Second must ensure the boxer will have sufficient water for the fight.

*Note: In a competition, there is always a qualified physician present, with the necessary medical and first aid equipment.*

*Note: The use of grease, vaseline or other products (including alcoholic lotions) on the face, arms or any other part of the boxer's body is forbidden if such products are likely to be harmful or offensive to the opponent.*

### **Procedures Followed by the Second**

The following measures should be taken by the Second during the rest intervals:

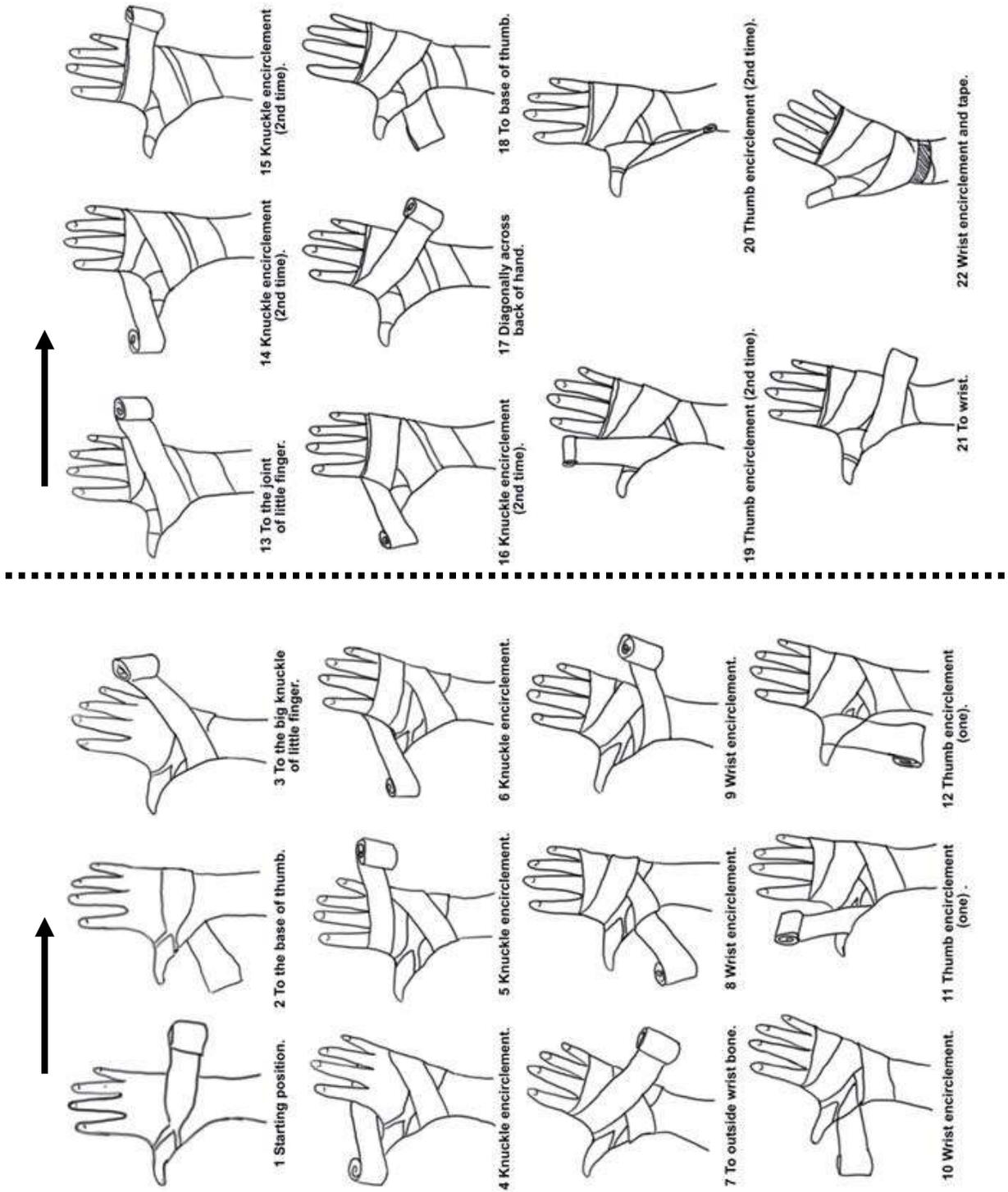
- 1) The Second places the stool in the corner immediately after the end of the round, and ensures the boxer is seated in a relaxing position.
- 2) The boxer's mouth guard is taken out, and washed.
- 3) The boxer is dried delicately with his or her personal towel. Rough dabbing should be avoided, especially in the face.
- 4) Using the boxer's personal bottle, the Second assists the boxer in drinking.
- 5) The Second examines and tidies up of the boxer's clothes and protective equipment (headgear; protective cup; chest protector in the case of a female boxer).

- 6) The Second puts back the mouth guard, and gives a last word of encouragement to the boxer.
- 7) The Second removes the stool from the ring, and puts it aside along with all other pieces of equipment.

**Other Responsibilities of the Second**

- If the boxer has been injured in one way or another during the fight, the second must consult the doctor as soon as possible after the end of the match.
- If a boxer is knocked out during a fight, it is imperative that the Second should follow the doctor's directive immediately, in order to make sure that the athlete receives the most suitable treatment without delay.

# ANNEX 1 - BANDAGING THE HANDS FOR TRAINING AND COMPETITION



## **Annex 2- Emergency Action Plan**

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is a plan designed by coaches to assist them in responding to emergency situations. The idea behind having such a plan prepared in advance is that it will help group leaders respond in a responsible and clear-headed way if an emergency occurs.

An EAP should be prepared for the gym where the athletes normally train and for any facility or site where the Club regularly host competitions. For away competitions, ask the host team or host facility for a copy of their EAP.

An EAP can be simple or elaborate should cover the following items:

1. Designate in advance who is in charge in the event of an emergency (this may very well be you).
2. Have a cell phone with you and make sure the battery is fully charged. If this is not possible, find out exactly where a telephone that you can use is located. Have spare change in the event you need to use a pay phone.
3. Have emergency telephone numbers with you (facility manager, fire, police, ambulance) as well as contact numbers (parents/guardians, next of kin, family doctor) for the participants.
4. Have on hand a medical profile for each participant, so that this information can be provided to emergency medical personnel. Include in this profile a signed consent from the parent/guardian to authorize medical treatment in an emergency.
5. Prepare directions to provide Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to enable them to reach the site as rapidly as possible. You may want to include information such as the closest major intersection, one way streets, or major landmarks.
6. Have a first aid kit accessible and properly stocked at all times (all coaches are strongly encouraged to pursue first aid training).
7. Designate in advance a “call person” (the person who makes contact with medical authorities and otherwise assists the person in charge). Be sure that your call person can give emergency vehicles precise instructions to reach your facility or site.

When an injury occurs, an EAP should be activated immediately if the injured person:

- is not breathing
- does not have a pulse
- is bleeding profusely
- has impaired consciousness
- has injured the back, neck or head
- has a visible major trauma to a limb



## Emergency Action Plan Checklist

### Access to telephones

- Cell phone, battery well charged
- Training venues
- Home venues
- Away venues
- List of emergency phone numbers (home competitions)
- List of emergency numbers (away competitions)
- Change available to make phone calls from a pay phone

### Directions to access the site

- Accurate directions to the site (practice)
- Accurate directions to the site (home competitions)
- Accurate directions to the site (away competitions)

### Participant information

- Personal profile forms
- Emergency contacts
- Medical profiles

### Personnel information

- The person in charge is identified
- The call person is identified
- Assistants (charge and call persons) are identified

- *The medical profile of each participant should be up to date and located in the first aid kit.*
- *A first aid kit must be accessible at all times, and must be checked regularly. See the appendices for suggestions on contents for a first-aid kit.*

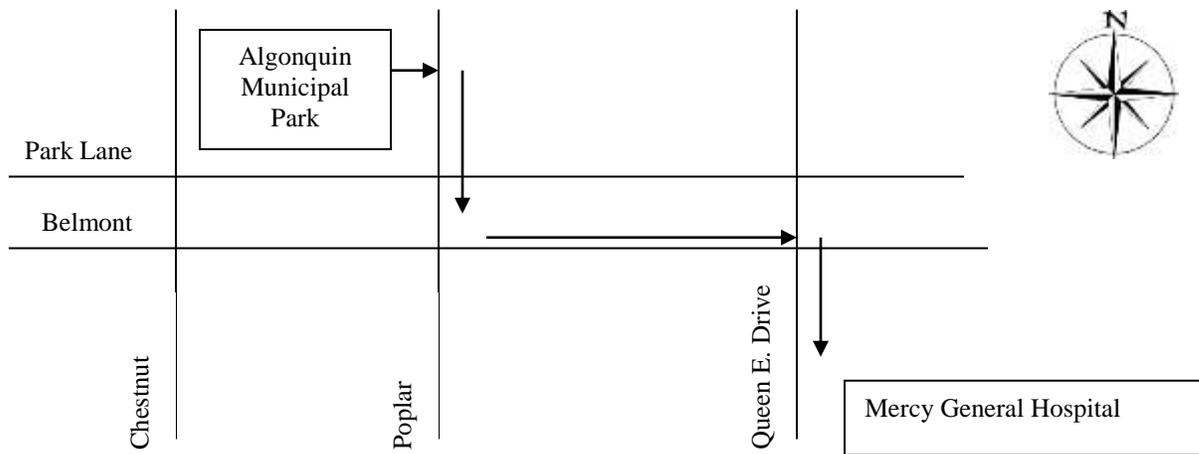
## Sample Emergency Action Plan (p.1 of 2)

### Contact Information

*Attach the medical profile for each participant and for all members of the coaching staff, as well as sufficient change to make several phone calls if necessary. The EAP should be printed two-sided, on a single sheet of paper.*

Emergency phone numbers:	<b>9-1-1 for all emergencies</b>
Cell phone number of coach:	(xxx) xxx-xxxx
Cell phone number of assistant coach:	(xxx) xxx-xxxx
Phone number of home facility:	(xxx) xxx-xxxx
Address of home facility:	<b>Algonquin Municipal Park</b> 123 Park Lane, between Chestnut St. and Poplar St. City, Province/Territory XXX XXX
Address of nearest hospital:	<b>Mercy General Hospital</b> 1234 Queen Elizabeth Drive City, Province/ Territory XXX XXX
Charge person (1 <sup>st</sup> option):	Suzy Chalmers (coach)
Charge person (2 <sup>nd</sup> option):	Joey Lemieux (assistant coach)
Charge person (3 <sup>rd</sup> option):	Angela Stevens (parent, nurse, usually on site)
Call person (1 <sup>st</sup> option):	Brad MacKenzie (parent, cell xxx-xxxx)
Call person (2 <sup>nd</sup> option):	Sheila Stevens (parent, cell xxx-xxxx)
Call person (3 <sup>rd</sup> option):	Stefano Martinez (parent, cell xxx-xxxx)

### Directions to Mercy General Hospital from Algonquin Municipal Park:



## Sample Emergency Action Plan (p.2 of 2)

### Roles and responsibilities

#### Charge person

- Clear the risk of further harm to the injured person by securing the area and shelter the injured person from the elements
- Designate who is in charge of the other participants
- Protect yourself (wears gloves if he/she is in contact with body fluids such as blood)
- Assess ABCs (checks that airway is clear, breathing is present, a pulse is present, and there is no major bleeding)
- Wait by the injured person until EMS arrives and the injured person is transported
- Fill in an accident report form

#### Call person

- Call for emergency help
- Provide all necessary information to dispatch (e.g. facility location, nature of injury, what, if any, first aid has been done)
- Clear any traffic from the entrance/access road before ambulance arrives
- Wait by the driveway entrance to the facility to direct the ambulance when it arrives
- Call the emergency contact person listed on the injured person's medical profile

## Steps To Follow When An Injury Occurs

**Note:** it is suggested that emergency situations be simulated during practice in order to familiarize coaches and athletes with the steps below.

### ***Step 1: Control the environment so that no further harm occurs***

- Stop all participants
- Protect yourself if you suspect bleeding (put on gloves)
- If outdoors, shelter the injured participant from the elements and from any traffic

### ***Step 2: Do a first assessment of the situation***

If the participant:

- is not breathing
- does not have a pulse
- is bleeding profusely
- has impaired consciousness
- has injured the back, neck or head
- has a visible major trauma to a limb
- Cannot move his/her arms or legs or has lost feeling in them

**If the participant does not show the signs above, proceed to Step 3**



**Activate  
EAP!**

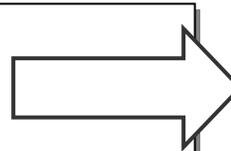
### ***Step 3: Do a second assessment of the situation***

- Gather the facts by asking the injured participant as well as anyone who witnessed the incident
- Stay with the injured participant and try to calm him/her; your tone of voice and body language are critical
- If possible, have the participant move himself/herself off the playing surface. Do not move an injured participant.

### ***Step 4: Assess the injury***

Have someone with first aid training complete an assessment of the injury and decide how to proceed.

If the person trained in first aid is not sure of the severity of the injury or there is no one available who has first aid training, activate EAP. If the assessor is sure the injury is minor, proceed to step 5.



**Activate  
EAP?**

### ***Step 5: Control the return to activity***

Allow a participant to return to activity after a minor injury only if there is no:

- Swelling
- Deformity
- Continued bleeding
- Reduced range of motion or pain when using the injured body part

### ***Step 6: Record the injury on an accident report form and inform the parents***

## **Annex 3 - Head Injuries and Concussions: Guidelines for Coaches**

**NB: The following information is presented as a series of guidelines only.**

**Head injuries must be treated by a recognized medical professional.**

### **Introduction**

Head injuries and concussions can occur in many sports, either in training or during competitions. Because of the potentially grave consequences of injuries to the head, coaches must take certain precautions and should enforce strict safety measures when dealing with them.

The information contained in this section is not designed to train coaches on how to implement a medical treatment or to offer medical advice in the event of a concussion. Rather, its purpose is to provide some recommendations on how to manage situations involving head injuries in a responsible manner. It is important to note that there is presently a lack of consensus in the medical community regarding precise grading scales and return to training or competition criteria following concussions.

### **What is a concussion?**

A concussion is an injury to the brain that results from a hit to the head, or to another part of the body that allows the transmission of impact forces to the head. It shows itself through a temporary alteration in the mental status of the individual, and may also be accompanied by some physical symptoms.

### **Some common causes of concussions**

The situations that may result in head injuries vary greatly from sport to sport. Producing a comprehensive list of possible causes is therefore difficult. However, some common causes include:

- direct blows to the head, face, jaw, or neck
- collisions from the blind side, or hits from behind
- hard fall on the buttocks, or whiplash effect
- poor quality of protective sport equipment (shock absorption), failure to wear protective equipment designed for the head, or improper adjustment of the same
- the environment (e.g. obstacles near playing surface)
- significant differences in the skill level, age, or size of participants involved in activities with physical contact or risk of impact
- poor physical condition, or insufficient strength in the neck and upper body musculature.

## Symptoms of a concussion

Symptoms observed in the case of a concussion include headache, dizziness, loss of consciousness, nausea, lethargy, memory loss, confusion or disorientation (lack of awareness of time, place, date), vacant stare, lack of focus, ringing in the ears, seeing stars or flashing lights, speech impairment, balance impairment, and problems with sight.

Other signs may include a major decrease in performance, difficulty following directions given by the coach, slow responses to simple questions, and displaying inappropriate or unusual reactions (laughing, crying) or behaviours (change in personality, illogical responses to sport situations).

A person can suffer from a concussion without losing consciousness.

## Managing a participant with concussion symptoms

The following short-term measures should be implemented in the event that a participant suffers a concussion:

- An unconscious participant, or an participant with significant changes in mental status following a head injury, must be transported to the emergency department of the nearest hospital by ambulance. This is a grave situation, and the participant *must be seen by a medical doctor immediately*. In such a situation, the *Emergency Action Plan must be implemented*.
- A participant showing *any* of the concussion symptoms should not be allowed to return to the current practice or competition.
- A participant showing concussion symptoms must not be left alone, and monitoring for the deterioration of his/her condition is essential. He/she should be medically evaluated as soon as possible following the injury. The circumstances of the injury should be recorded and communicated to the medical personnel.
- If any of the concussion symptoms reoccur, the participant's condition should be considered serious, and the individual *must* go immediately to the hospital.

## Managing the participant's return after a concussion

Although a participant may have been given the authorization to return to regular training and competition, this must be done gradually. The participant must be re-evaluated periodically during the weeks that follow his/her return, to ensure that there are no reoccurring symptoms.

Below are a series of steps to assist coaches in managing the return to training or to competition of a participant who has suffered a concussion. Each step should take at least one day, although proceeding through each step may take longer depending on individual circumstances (Step 5 applies predominantly to sports that involve body contact).

- Step 1:** No activity, complete rest; if no symptoms are observed for one full day, move to Step 2.
- Step 2:** Low-intensity continuous exercise, such as walking, jogging, or cycling on a stationary bicycle; if no symptoms are observed, move to Step 3.
- Step 3:** Low-intensity, sport-specific activity without contact; if no symptoms are observed, move to Step 4.
- Step 4:** Moderate-intensity sport-specific training activities without body contact; if no symptoms are observed, move to Step 5.
- Step 5:** Regular practice with body contact if it is required by the sport (no hard impact); if no symptoms are observed, move to Step 6.
- Step 6:** Return to regular training and to competition.

If symptoms do reoccur, the participant must immediately stop any form of activity and be examined by a medical doctor before resuming training or competition. It is extremely important for the participant, the coach, and the medical personnel to be open and frank when evaluating the participant's condition. If reoccurring symptoms are not disclosed, the participant may suffer permanent damage.

## Repeated concussions

Some data suggest that after a first concussion, a person might be more at risk of suffering from concussive injuries in the future. If a participant has a history of repeated concussions, he/she should participate in sport activities only when *full clearance* to do so is obtained from a medical professional.

*NB: This information is based on the summary and agreement statement of the first international symposium on concussion in sport held in Vienna in 2001, and on a brochure produced by Judo Canada, entitled "Safety First - What You Need To Know About Concussions." The Coaching Association of Canada is grateful to the Concussion in Sport Group and its chair, Dr. Karen M. Johnston, Division of Neurosurgery, McGill University Health Centre, and to Judo Canada's sport director, Andrzej Sadej, for permission to adapt this material. The Coaching Association of Canada also wishes to express its thanks to Dr. Johnston for reviewing this text.*

## **Annex 4 – NCCP Code of Ethics**

(From CAC website [http://www.coach.ca/eng/certification/documents/REP\\_NCCP-Code-of-Ethics\\_March07.pdf](http://www.coach.ca/eng/certification/documents/REP_NCCP-Code-of-Ethics_March07.pdf) )

### **What is a Code of Ethics?**

A code of ethics defines what is considered good and right behaviour. It reflects the values held by a group. These values are usually organized into a series of core principles that contain standards of behavior expected of members while they perform their duties. It can also be used as a benchmark to assess whether certain behaviours are acceptable.

### **Why a Code of Ethics in Coaching?**

Core coaching values have been formalized and expressed as a series of principles in the NCCP Code of Ethics. These principles can be thought of as a set of behavioral expectations regarding participation in sport, coaching athletes or teams, and administering sports. The NCCP Code of Ethics can help coaches to evaluate issues arising within sport because it represents a reference for what constitutes both “the good and right thing to do”. For example, the Code of Ethics helps coaches make balanced decisions about achieving personal or team goals and the means by which these goals are attained.

### **Values Underpinning the NCCP Code of Ethics**

The NCCP Code of Ethics is a simplified version of the Code of Ethics of Coaches of Canada (formerly the Canadian Professional Coaches Association). However, both codes deal with the same fundamental values of safety, responsible coaching, engaging in relations with integrity, respecting athletes, and honouring sport. These values are expressed as 5 cores ethical principles.

1. Physical safety and health of athletes
2. Coaching responsibly
3. Integrity in relations with others
4. Respect of athletes
5. Honouring sport

The table on the next page provides a description of each principle and outlines some implications for coaches.

**ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND THEIR CORRESPONDING BEHAVIORS/EXPECTATIONS**

<b>Principles</b>	<b>Standards of Behavior Expected of Coaches</b>
<b>Physical safety and health of athletes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that training or competition site is safe at all times.</li> <li>• Be prepared to act quickly and appropriately in case of emergency.</li> <li>• Avoid placing athletes in situations presenting unnecessary risk or that are beyond their level.</li> </ul>
<b>Coaching responsibly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strive to preserve the present and future health and well-being of athletes.</li> <li>• Make wise use of the authority of the position and make decisions in the interest of athletes.</li> <li>• Foster self-esteem among athletes.</li> <li>• Avoid deriving personal advantage from a situation or decision.</li> <li>• Know one’s limitations in terms of knowledge and skills when making decisions, giving instructions or taking action.</li> <li>• Honour commitments, word given, and agreed objectives.</li> </ul>
<b>Integrity in relations with others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain confidentiality and privacy of personal information and use it appropriately.</li> <li>• Avoid situations that may affect objectivity or impartiality of coaching duties.</li> <li>• Abstain from all behaviours considered to be harassment or inappropriate relations with an athlete.</li> </ul>
<b>Respect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always ensure decisions are taken equitably.</li> <li>• Ensure that everyone is treated equally, regardless of athletic potential, race, sex, language, religion, or age.</li> <li>• Preserve the dignity of each person in interacting with others.</li> </ul>
<b>Honouring sport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect the principles, rules, and policies in force.</li> <li>• Strictly observe and ensure observance of all regulations.</li> <li>• Aim to compete fairly.</li> <li>• Maintain dignity in all circumstances and exercise self-control.</li> <li>• Respect officials and accept their decisions without questioning their integrity.</li> </ul>

## Annex 5- Feedback evaluation form

### Ask Yourself These Questions During and After the Practice

#### Was my feedback:

- Specific, not general, for example: "You did \_\_\_\_\_perfectly!" instead of "That's fine!"?
- Positive and constructive, not negative and humiliating?
- Directly linked to the skill or behaviour to be improved?
- Informative and relevant to the most important performance factors?
- Balanced? Did it contain information on what the athlete did well and on what still needs improvement? E.g. "Your \_\_\_\_\_ (movement) is better than last time. The next thing to do would be to \_\_\_\_\_ (add another level of complexity to the movement, or a particular piece to refine)".
- Clear, precise, and easy to understand? E.g. did I use simple words?

## References

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