

USA HOCKEY'S COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since 1974, USA Hockey has offered a Coaching Education Program to train volunteer coaches in the technical, administrative, and humanistic skills necessary to work with amateur athletes. The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program is widely recognized within the U.S. Olympic community as one of the best, or the best, training program of its type. USA Hockey commits over \$1,200,000 to this program annually to maintain and enhance its curriculum and materials.

This commitment is based on three significant arguments which are universally accepted in the amateur hockey community:

1. Quality coaching is the single most important factor in the development of athletes, and the sport itself.
2. The experiences a player gains as he/she participates in hockey are directly influenced by the coach's qualifications and their educational background.
3. Recognizing that a wide variety of people are engaged in coaching youth hockey, for a variety of reasons, the education program must be kept simple, practical, age-specific, and user friendly.

PROGRAM STAFF

The Coaching Education Program is led by a Director-level staff member in the national office. The current Director is Mark Tabrum, who was appointed to that role in July, 2000. There are two national volunteer leaders. One is a member of USA Hockey's Board of Directors. He is the Coaching Section Director, currently Al Bloomer of the Rocky Mountain District. The other is the National Coach in Chief, currently Robert O'Connor of Minnesota. Each of USA Hockey's 11 districts has a leader of their respective district coaching programs, known as the District Coach-In-Chief.

The Coaching Education Program also maintains close connections with youth coaches in their local hockey association. Through the A.C.E. (Association Coaching Education) Director program, each USA Hockey District Coach-in-Chief appoints a District ACE Administrator. This person establishes a structure within their region of the country which attempts to place or identify a local ACE Coordinator in each youth hockey association. These local ACE Directors serve as the voice of their coaches in scheduling and operating the CEP Clinic program, plus any other duties assigned by their local association's board of directors.

PROGRAM VISION

As a group, the Coaching Education Program leadership recently developed several significant statements of purpose, which help to explain what the program is about. These are:

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Educating coaches in pursuit of excellence in ice hockey.

MISSION STATEMENT

The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program is committed to developing coaches who will be effective instructors and role models, through a comprehensive education program at all levels of the sport.

VALUES STATEMENT

The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program embraces the following values to establish the moral and ethical priorities that guide the program:

Character
Knowledge

Commitment
Leadership

Enjoyment
Sportsmanship

Integrity
Vision

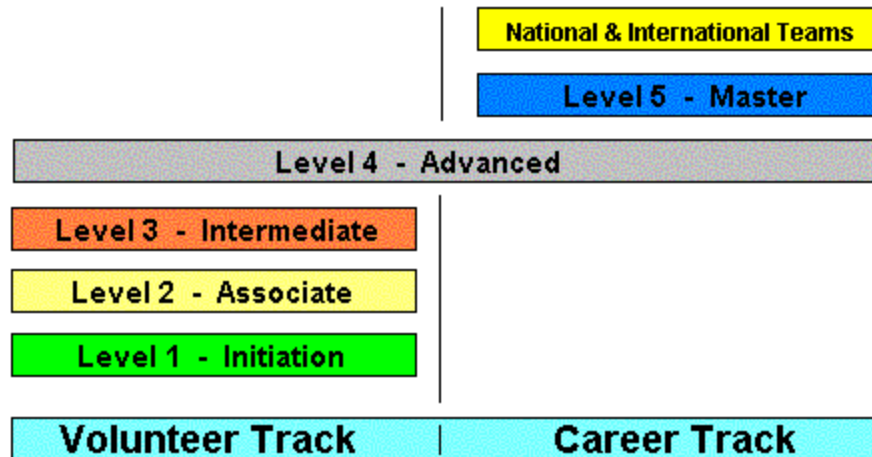
Readers who look carefully at the above statements will understand that coaching is a vocation, or pursuit, that is not to be taken lightly. The influence of coaches on young people is profound, and long lasting. Many athletes who are adults today can still recall the coaches (and teachers) of their youth, and with the wisdom of age, can classify these influences in their lives accordingly.

Thus, the Coaching Education Program is primarily about teaching. Many new coaches have some hockey experience, usually as a player. Most have little or no experience as an instructor or teacher, and many have little or no experience as an administrator, or as a human-relations specialist. All of these skills must be mastered as a coach, and these form the basis for the program curriculum, which is based on a progression from "beginner" to "master" coach. The Coaching Education Program also is built on the premise that, as the coach progresses from level to level, the information presented will be more substantial, and more focused. This means that at the higher levels of the program, clinics are spread out over a number of days in order to contain all the material, while the earlier levels of the program are all capable of being delivered in one day.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The diagram below illustrates the levels of the Coaching Education Program, beginning at the bottom and progressing upward. It also recognizes that in some cases, coaches may cross a line from volunteer to paid professional, and that these individuals have their own education requirements which can be met through this program.

USA HOCKEY COACHING PROGRAM LEVELS



COACHES AS ROLE MODELS

To conclude this introductory information, here is the USA Hockey Coaches Code of Conduct, which we expect every coach, volunteer or professional, to understand and adhere to:

COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

Winning is a consideration but not the only one, nor the most important one. Care more about the child than winning the game. Remember-players are involved in hockey for fun and enjoyment.

Be a positive role model to your players, display emotional maturity, and be alert to the physical safety of players.

Be generous with your praise when it is deserved, be consistent, honest, be fair and just, do not criticize players publicly, learn to be a more effective communicator and coach, and don't yell at players.

Adjust to personal needs and problems of players, be a good listener, never verbally or physically abuse a player or official, give all players the opportunity to

improve their skills, gain players' confidence and build their self-esteem, teach the basics.

Organize practices that are fun and challenging for your players. Familiarize yourself with the rules, techniques, and strategies of hockey, encourage all your players to be team players.

Maintain an open line of communication with your players' parents. Explain the goals and objectives of your association.

Be concerned with the overall development of your players. Stress good health habits and clean living.

TO PLAY THE GAME IS GREAT - TO LOVE THE GAME IS GREATER.
