

COACHING TIPS

1. Have Fun

Going to hockey practice should be enjoyable for your players so that they want to come back and learn to excel at the sport. Make your exercises fun and keep the environment light.

2. Get to Know Your Players

Each Child is different in innumerable ways, ranging from what motivates them, to their natural talent set, to why they are playing hockey in the first place. Some will be natural leaders, while some prefer to play other roles. Knowing your team will help you understand how to deal with the group in the most positive and productive manner.

3. Don't Play Favorites

Treat every player equally. Kids (and their parents) are keenly aware of favoritism. There is no "I" in team, and the coach should be a leader by example to instill that ideal.

4. Focus on Fundamentals

Even at the highest level of professional hockey, fundamentals are a major day-to-day focus. Teaching basics like skating, puck control, shooting and passing will be far more beneficial to your players than complex strategies.

5. Recognize hard work

Effort should be rewarded in addition to accomplishment, particularly at the youth level. The more positive reinforcement players receive for trying, the harder they will try.

6. Teach Respect

Kids should learn to respect their teammates, opponents, coaches and officials. Hockey teams are families, as is the hockey community as a whole. Your players should understand that opponents are foes on the ice only and that coaches and officials should be treated with respect, even when you don't agree with their decisions.

7. Get to Know the parents

Families play a key part in every hockey team – after all, someone has to drive to all those practices! Hockey is a passionate sport, and the teamwork, respect and support that you demonstrate at practice will be most effective if it can be reinforced at home.

Overall, the goal of every coach should be to help the players enjoy the season, and learn to love the great game of hockey. If every player on your team has fun and wants to play again next year, you'll know you have met the most important goal – no matter how many games you win or lose.