

# Get Better

## GET BETTER

# Tips for Trying Out

With tryouts happening right now, below is some advice from former NHL player Jeff Serowik about helping your player find the right place to play.

**Coaching, coaching, coaching** – The most important factor since you're entrusting your son or daughter in this person's care for an entire season. Make sure you know who the coach is and what his or her credentials are. Have they coached before? Have they worked with kids before? Do they have a son or daughter on the team? What is their history with winning/losing and with allocating playing time for each kid? How do they communicate with the kids, parents and other coaches? Is he or she a positive or negative person? A screamer? Will he instill confidence in your athlete? Do the kids have fun in practice? Do they respect the coach?

These are very important years in your kid's life, and I strongly believe that confidence and feeling good about yourself are most important.

**Do your homework** - If you can, check out a practice this year to see what you are getting yourself into, and use your hockey contacts you have to learn what kind of person this coach is. Ask questions of current teammates and other families.

**Make a call** - Don't be afraid to call a coach and ask as many questions as necessary to get a good feel for his style and coaching techniques. A coach who is a caring, legitimate person will take time to talk with you and share perspectives.

**Development** - How many practices and skill sessions will the kids receive? Are they full ice, half ice or shared practices? Well run practices are the most important tool to get your player to the next level. And skill sessions are a great time for kids to work on individual skills like skating stride, quickness, passing, shooting and conditioning.

**Coaching education** - Does the organization offer a curriculum for the coaches



Knowing the style of a potential coach is important at tryout time.

to follow? Is it overseen by anyone? Are the officers listed and available? Do coaches have to answer to anyone? It's nice to have an independent person to give perspective once in a while.

**Cost** - What is the cost and what am I getting for my money? Many organizations have hidden costs. How many games, practices, skill sessions, accessories (bags, sweats, jerseys), tournaments and clinics or camps are included in the season fee? Will there be additional charges for tournaments or playoffs? Are you expected or required to participate in fund raising events? What will be the cost of travel?

**Location** - Where does your player want to play for the next 6-7 months? Have a conversation with your player to see if he or she wants to make an hour commute 3 days a week. Or does he or she want to play closer to home with friends? Let them express their feelings, because if they're not committed or happy, it's a waste of time, money and opportunity.

**Set your player up for success** - What is it about a particular program that will have your hockey player smiling every day as they tug off their skates? This is most important. They need to have fun and feel good about themselves. Be careful not to subconsciously push your player too hard. A few parents don't get it - they live through their kids, sadly putting them into more demanding situations than they can handle.

*Serowik is a former NHL player and owns Pro Ambitions Hockey, Inc.*



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