

How to Stand Out at Tryouts

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For many players, tryouts are just around the corner. Some players find tryouts to be a nerve-wracking time, but if you take the time to prepare yourself there's no reason you won't hear your name called when it comes time to pick the team. You don't need to be the best player on the ice to get noticed. Here are some simple tips you can use to stand out in the eyes of the coaches and give yourself the best chance to make the team.

- 1. Go to the front of the line. This seems simple enough, but it can also be really scary for players. Coaches notice little details like this. Show some initiative and confidence in yourself and your ability to do the drill right and set the example.*
- 2. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Sometimes coaches don't always do a great job of explaining the drills perfectly. If you have a question as the coach is explaining the drill on the board, don't be afraid to ask. Odds are you're not the only one who doesn't understand.*
- 3. Out-hustle everybody. Every coach is looking for players who are willing to compete hard in every drill and will push themselves and their teammates to be the best. Be first to the puck, be the first player back on the backcheck, be first in everything. Remember that hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard.*
- 4. Be ready when you hit the ice. You want to be in shape when you show up at tryouts. Don't let tryouts be the first time you've stepped on the ice since last season. Get on the ice a few times before tryouts so you can regain the feel of the puck and condition the muscles needed for skating. It's also a great chance to make sure your equipment is in good condition and still fits.*
- 5. Play your game. Do what you do well and don't be distracted by who's evaluating or what other players are doing on the ice. Be assertive, be hungry and be at the front of the line for every drill. Pay attention and listen to the coaches' instructions. Show them that you're excited to be there and you're ready to do whatever it takes to make the team.*

It's up to you to earn a spot on the team. Don't look to blame anyone else if you don't succeed. Hopefully you'll make the team you're trying out for. If things don't work out, it's important to learn from the experience and continue to work hard on all aspects of your game.

Adding to the article, here are the things that I look for:

1) Competitiveness - players that compete hard, want the puck, come flying off the bench for your shift, hustle-hustle-hustle.

2) Do the little things well - it's not all about scoring goals. I want to see players who pass, see the ice well, play defensively, hustle on the backcheck, use their body to get the puck, follow the play, work hard on every shift.

3) How you react to your mistakes - hockey is a game of mistakes. You WILL make mistakes in tryouts - fall down, make a bad pass, hit the post, etc. But do you rise above the mistake and just try harder the next shift or do you pout and give up and disappear for the rest of tryouts because you think you have failed?

4) Be yourself - if you are a defenseman, play D during the scrimmages. So play to your strengths - now is not the time to try a new position. If you are a playmaker, make plays. If you are strong defensively, play strong D. Tryouts are not the time to start playing a new way or a new position - leverage your strengths. Most coaches are looking for the best team players - not necessarily by position. Do what you do best - if you are a very good passer, then pass the puck - you WILL get noticed without scoring goals. As a coach, I'm not interested in seeing kids go coast to coast - at the PW and Bantam level, I want to see if they understand and can play the TEAM game. At these 2 age groups, players that don't pass and have a "me-first" attitude will be passed over for team players who think "pass-first" and hustle on every shift. Frankly, I take points off for kids that hog the puck - passing is the name of the game - NOT over-handling the puck!