

Prior Lake Youth Hockey Points of Emphasis (Part 2)

Emotional Stability – This is easier to emphasize at the “older” levels (squirt and up), but players need to learn the importance of not getting to high or low. The ability of a player to accept failure in practice or games and bounce back quickly is extremely important. We need to stress the importance of giving a consistent effort and remaining positive; everything else will take care of itself. Coaches look for players who have a consistent work ethic, game and practice performance, and display emotional stability!

Leaders – Youth Captains play a minor role in the performance of a team; at the high school level they are integral to success. We need good leaders and players willing to be vocal and/or lead by example. It’s the coaches responsibility to make sure vocal leaders do it the right way. Coaches have many responsibilities during the course of a season and good leaders on and off the ice are invaluable. At some point everyone goes down by one or two; at times like this leaders step up, bring energy, and focus the team. Please encourage leadership in your players!

Shot Blocking – Blocked shots win games; players willing to do it earn ice time in special situations. Players not willing to sacrifice are easily recognized and detrimental to the teams goals. Please remind your players the “flamingo” half effort block is not ok. The majority of blocks should consist of one knee down/chest up directly in the opposing player shot lane. Full body lay down should only be in desperate situations. Shot blocking is right near the top of important player intangibles.

Individual Battles – Players need to win one-on-one battles all over the ice. Teams who win loose puck races and battles along boards usually have a smile after the game.

Back Pressure – We like to pressure the puck carrier whenever possible at the high school level. Defenseman need to communicate with forwards and assist in assigning coverage. Back pressure needs to commit all the way back to the slot and only release on change of possession. Please do not let players backcheck to the Redline and put it in coast mode; the feet need to continue moving and stay on your responsibility.

Solid Two Way Players – Some forwards think the defensive zone is only for defenseman and goalies. As players get older, they must learn to play both ends of the ice in order to have success, or they won’t play as much as they’d like. At the high school level we essentially play man coverage with centers low and wings up top. Players need to have sticks on the ice at all times when engaging in the D Zone; your players will find out that stick breaks up a lot of plays. Please work with your players to help them understand the importance of a good two way player. Stay on the defensive side of your player (offensive player to the outside), do not over-commit!

If you have any questions please let me know!

Joe Pankratz