

Philosophy and Expectations for the Coaches

Definition of a coach: An expert in his field, he coaches with confidence and passion for the game of hockey. He develops his players and makes them meet the highest possible standards. He coaches his players to win.

Expectations:

Be committed to excellence: Every play, every practice, every meeting, every situation, every time.

Be positive: Adopt a positive attitude. Players will respond better to a positive environment than to a negative one. Have energy.

Be prepared: You cannot control which team wins a game, but you can determine how your players prepare to win.

Pay attention to detail: All aspects of a player's effort to prepare mentally, physically, and fundamentally are a coach's responsibility.

Be organized: Make the best possible use of whatever time and resources we may have.

Be flexible: You must have the ability to respond and adapt to change.

Be ethical: You must exhibit integrity in all of your dealings with players and staff members. The first thing you must do is have all the facts, and then you can be constructive. If you are constructive, you will be reflecting your sincerity and dedication as well as your personal and team integrity. If the facts indicate that you made a poor decision or that you took an improper action, then you must admit that you were wrong. On the other hand, if the evidence based on those facts, shows that you were correct, you must stand firmly and fairly for what you believe is right.

Emphasize sportsmanship: The game of hockey must be coached and played in ways that sportsmanship and a team's ability to win a championship are never compromised.

The bottom line:

I want to let the assistants coach and teach. I want to contribute to them the best way I can. I want to help keep the pace moving, keep the focus sharp, but I don't want to micromanage. I don't want to commission a tailor and sew it for him. I want the coaches to know exactly what I am trying to do and why. The tailor won't be able to make the suit I want unless he knows what I want it for and why I want him to make it, but in the

end, he's going to make the suit. Once the coaches know my philosophy and what I expect, they can apply their knowledge to their assignment. I trust the expertise of the coaches as long as they follow my plan.

DISCIPLINE: We have to get back to demanding discipline. We have defined it but we must teach it by practicing like that every day. Make sure we pay attention to details. If we say "skate to the line", we make sure they skate to the line. There's no getting close to the line; there's no one inch from the line. If you're supposed to touch the line, you touch the line. If you only get close to the line, you only get close to the victories.

In the end I will be in charge of disciplining the players and handing out the consequences. I need you guys to help by "helping" the players. Notice the little things and then try to correct them in a quick "good-cop" manner. Help the players to become more discipline. But keep me informed every step of the way. Tell me the little things that I'm missing. If the same guy is continuing to make the same mistake I will have to step-in and "discipline" him.

SIMPLIFY THE MESSAGE: We must break the message down into the simplest terms so anyone can understand them. Simplify and let the meaning surface. We must try and get our meetings down to about 25 minutes. If it is a "long" meeting, we must give the players a substantial break. If we keep them too long their minds start wandering. They start thinking about everything but whatever it is we're talking about. And once we've lost them, it's nearly impossible to get them back.

AS TOUGH QUESTIONS OF YOURSELF AND EACH OTHER: We have to be hard on ourselves. We need to look at ourselves as coaches and ask "Where do we need to improve, and how do we do it? What do I need to do to become better?" We have to challenge the players to do this, but we have to do too. This meeting is a great way to do this. We should meet often (maybe in a less formal setting) but we should constantly evaluate ourselves as coaches.

PROFESSIONALISM: Professionalism and a winning attitude are just of the utmost importance to me. We must continually define what this means, and find ways to teach the players and demand the players to act in a professional manner.

WE MUST GET TO KNOW OUR PLAYERS BETTER: By that I mean, know their skills. Know their potential. And to some extent, know their personalities. We have to know their needs as players and as people.

How can we know them better? To know their abilities we closely observe them in practice and games and on tape. We must communicate with each other our findings on each player, and have facts/evidence to prove it. Maybe we even start keeping notes or begin a player evaluation form/folder for each player. To know them as individuals we

must look them in the eye, and we must absolutely make time for them. We have to talk to the captains or even the parents for insight. Again we must keep each other informed with information on all the players.

When making time for players one-on-one we should take the opportunity to:

1. Let players know what you expect of them
2. Bolster their confidence
3. Answer their questions
4. Offer support

Also, we must be able to get issues out on the table. Coaches and players must be able to air grievances and deal with problems in an open manner, respectfully but without holding back. Otherwise, conflicts and resentments fester, sapping motivation and undermining teamwork. It helps coaches and players to understand each other better. It enables everyone to put conflicts to rest so they can get back to the business of working and winning.

PREACH (FOR LACK OF A BETTER TERM) SERENITY: Even though we may be nervous or upset, a steady demeanor will let the players know that we are in charge, and can reduce any tensions they may have.

I think we can do this by:

1. Focus on the present – “Every shift is a new day”
2. Maintain your perspective – “Big picture”. Sense of humor. Supporting each other. Knowledge of our own abilities and past performances. Realization that tomorrow is a chance to do better.
3. Keep your cool – Have patience. Don’t get too low over each defeat or too high over each win.

SUSTAIN OPTIMISM: Slumps and setbacks are inevitable. What matters is how we respond to them. The players can develop an optimistic approach, and as coaches we can set a good example for the team. Optimism is as important when you’re winning as when you’re losing. Let’s strive to build faith in each player and then believe in each others resiliency. Resilience is an attitude you can develop. Let’s never count ourselves out regarding any game or goal we desire.

