



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Val Manchak-Jensen to Lead Jr. Steelheads U16 and High School Girls Programs for 2025–26 Season

The Jr. Steelheads are proud to announce Val Manchak-Jensen as the Head Coach of both the U16 Girls and High School Girls teams for the 2025–26 season. Now entering her third year with the organization, Coach Val continues to elevate the standard of female hockey development in Idaho and the Western United States through her elite-level experience, relentless energy, and deep investment in each athlete's growth.

A former National Champion, All-American, and professional player, Val brings global experience to the bench — including time in Canada, Europe, and the NCAA — and is widely regarded as one of the top female skating and skills coaches in North America. Her resume includes building the inaugural 19U Purcell Prep team into a national powerhouse, coaching multiple world champions, and mentoring over 50 players into NCAA programs.

Now based in Boise, Coach Val brings a mission-driven approach to building the #1 female hockey pathway in Idaho, with a model focused on character, creativity, development, and long-term success — on and off the ice.

Her 2025–26 plan is deeply detailed and built around these core pillars:

For the High School Team:

- **Nationals-Oriented Structure:** 30–35 games, 7+ tournaments, and 7 high-intensity development weekends blending skill work, systems, video review, and mental training.
- **Advanced Systems & Exposure:** High-level systems (1-3-1, stretch passes, forecheck variations), college advisor Zooms, recruiting workshops, and targeted tournament showcases.
- **Accountability & Performance Standards:** Players must meet training benchmarks, pass fitness tests, and log their development. Effort and maturity drive playing time in key events.

For the U16 Team:

- **Development-First Model:** Focused on creativity, skill progression, and foundational understanding of systems — with more flexibility and exploration encouraged.
- **Shared Ice with HS:** Joint development weekends provide U16 players with high-level exposure, cross-age mentorship, and acceleration opportunities in a competitive setting.
- **Character + Competition:** Off-ice leadership development, physical literacy (plyometrics, body control), and a team identity built on skating, grit, and hockey sense.

Coach Val's holistic vision includes boot camps, mental skills work, nutrition talks, parent involvement initiatives, yoga/recovery, and even cross-disciplinary training (MMA, boxing, wrestling) to create resilient, well-rounded athletes. Her emphasis on communication and player empowerment sets the tone for a culture built on belief, effort, and opportunity.

Her legacy already includes world champions, Division I athletes, and next-generation leaders — and now, she's building the next chapter with the Jr. Steelheads.

Welcome back, Coach Val — the future of girls hockey in Idaho is in very good hands.

Go Steelheads!