



Coaching Philosophy

Establishing and executing your coaching philosophy is a challenging undertaking for coaches

We have summarized many of our philosophies and coaching values in the information below and encourage you to challenge your thinking and build a philosophy applicable to your coaching situation. It is very important that coaches share their philosophy with the players and parents and the beginning of the season. **This is the easy part though!!**

Adhering to your values and principles and living up to a very high standard on a day to day basis is the hard part; especially when things may not be going so well with your team. Each year coaches need to re-evaluate their philosophies and adapt and build on them based on their learning and experiences.

Considerations:

- We all know our roles on the bench and we don't jump into another coaches' role.
- We love the puck and never want to give it up, as it is so hard to get back. If we lose it, we lose it the right way and don't hand it to the opponent.
- You can't coach what you can't see. We have to learn to see, especially away from the puck

- **“You become what you value” – PLATO. “Your team will become what you value”. - MALONEY**

- Players don't have time to think on the ice as the game is so quick. Players are to use their instincts and habits, which are developed in practice.
- “Tell me I'll forget, Show me and I might remember, Involve me and I'll understand”.
- Everyone plays to their strengths. A small and skilled player who is ½ the size of others does not need to be running around trying to crush people.
- Most coaches are auditory communicators but the problem is most kids are kinaesthetic learners!!! How do we bridge this gap?

What about goal setting with your team?

- Many coaches make the mistake of setting goals such as: We want to be a 500 team, we want to score 5 goals a game, we want to win a Championship. These in fact are not goals at all, they are results. As coaches we can't confuse goals and results. The goals we set as coaches can be things like: Practice habits, nutrition, desire and compete level, execution. If we worry about these factors the results will look after themselves.
- Telling a player to not be scared out there accomplishes nothing. Build confidence in players by giving them opportunities to practice safely with lots of reps and feedback. For example, “Danger Zone” practice.
- We do not yell at the players during the play. We commentate on the bench. We want to develop creative decision makers and not dependent order takers.
- Our bench manner is.....“What you do speaks so loudly I can't hear what you are saying.”
- We as coaches must have the courage to hold each other accountable to our standards and values.
- Put downs, bullying, intimidation from one player to the next carries with it severe consequences.
- We never mention winning. We try to build the win and focus on the journey and the process.
- If we demand that our players work incredibly hard, we must do the same as coaches. We will be prepared, innovative and striving to improve just like the players.
- Shift length is a habit and it takes selfless players and constant coach reinforcement. The average NHL shift is around 45 seconds. Practice habits teach this concept.
- Pre-game speeches always address 3 keys to success. These 3 keys are posted in the room. We also have one on one meetings with certain players prior to every game.

How important is winning?

- Great coaches re-define winning for their players and parents. Winning has nothing to do with wins and losses. Winning is developing life-skills, improving skills, building friendships, and so forth. Too many times success is measured by the scoreboard!!
- Coaches that draw attention away from the scoreboard are able to minimize pressure on themselves and their players.
- We send feedback e-mails to players every two months. Coaches are assigned 6 players each and write the reports identifying strengths and areas for improvement on and off the ice. The impact is significant. Use TheDrillBook feedback tool.
- We set up the dressing room, such that all line combinations sit together, D-pairs sit together, goaltenders together.
- We always link game to practice and practice to game. Meaningful and purposeful drills that link to game performance engage players every ice session.
- What happens in the dressing room is the parents business. We have no secrets.
- We set goals for players in drills and always have themes that we focus on.

- Coaching a team also means involving and educating the parents. Saying that you are just here for the kids doesn't wash.
- "Saying you've taught when nobody has learned is like saying you've sold when nobody has bought".
- Our dressing room is not a play area. Players learn to focus, prepare, and warm-up.

What do you remember about great mentors/teachers/coaches you've experienced in your lifetime?

- Probably not the drills they ran, or formulas they taught you. We'd suggest it was their leadership, belief in you as a person, support, encouragement, passion.....Remember these principles when you think about your team and the legacy you want to leave.
- One of the greatest honors of being a coach is have a player approach you ten years after the fact and say "**Hi, Coach**".
- Video is a key, as players need to see themselves in action to fully understand what the coaches are communicating.
- Our team dresses professionally for all games: Dress Shirt, Tie, Slacks, no ball caps.
- We ask our players for input and ideas. We are not afraid to admit to the players that coaches make mistakes also.
- Good coaching is removing excuses and creating reasons to succeed versus reasons to fail.
- We have an active off-ice training program and the same environment we create at the arena exists in the gym.
- Our ultimate goal is to have life long learners and lovers of the game of hockey and sport. We want to develop a special bond and friendships that last a lifetime.
- Players cannot learn if they are afraid of failure. Learning is achieved by making mistakes. How coaches handle these mistakes determines if players learn and develop.
- We never shorten the bench and we use innovative bench management. Ice time is not a given though, it is earned.
- Any idiot can point out all of the mistakes players make. Great coaches find all of the positives and build on those. By the way, what level did you play coach X?
- Swearing, slapping your stick, pouting and poor body language is unacceptable. Coaches will not ignore it and players will be held accountable for their actions. The same code applies to the coaches.