**20XX/XX UXX Coach Welcome Letter**

My name is Allison Smith, and I am the Head Coach of your 20XX/XX GCGH UXX EO Stars/Stars/Shooting Stars.

I'm very excited about the upcoming hockey season and will be looking to build a team of players who are equally excited, enthusiastic, and committed to sharing a great season!  
  
The 20XX/XX season will be my XXh behind the bench and for the past X years my focus has been mainly developing players on competitive teams with GCGH. I would like to share my Coaching Philosophy that I have developed over my XX years of Coaching:

**Coaching Philosophy**

* Coaching youth is a privilege not a right. I view the opportunity to coach young players as an incredible honor.
* Player safety is paramount and will be always looked after.
* My emphasis is on player development not just skating around cones but overall player development (developing the hockey mind as well as the feet)—focusing on this overall development will lead to team success.
* Players need to have fun.
* I believe in teaching but keeping it fun at the same time. I expect the same from all other team officials/coaches.
* A positive and constructive approach is always applied under my coaching model.
* Creativity is key: I like to encourage creativity by the players. Players are encouraged to make decisions and adapt to changes on the ice (e.g., forwards have to decide whether to carry the puck across the line or dump; defense are encouraged to make use of all options when breaking out of the zone).
* Instruction/coaching will support them in developing their decision-making processes.
* Player development includes behavior both on and off ice (how to be part of a team; how to handle winning and losing, etc.)
* Parental support is important: It takes a village to raise a child and a team of volunteers to run a team. I harness the talents of the parents to support the team. This may include using external experts.
* Player health and their educational requirements are paramount.
* Attention must be directed toward building a strong on-ice team of coaches and parents and a strong off-ice team (manager, trainer, treasure, dressing room supervisors). They are essential elements to the team’s overall success.

Hockey needs to foremost be fun and safe. Players should be challenged to improve their skills with a team first mentality.

**Season Plan - Overall Goal**

To provide a fun but competitive environment, a team environment that will not only improve the player’s individual skills but to develop team tactics in a way that will keep the young players engaged and give them the tools to enjoy the game for years to come.

The coaching plan is divided under three components.

1. **Pre-Season (April through to August-September)**

Team formation and orientation

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| **Objectives** | **How it will be achieved** |
| Team formation and orientation   * Form on-ice team of coaches, practice helpers and trainer * Form off-ice team including manager, treasurer, fund-raisers, social organizer, tournament manager * Consideration of player positions | * GCGH evaluations * Player/parents meeting; team off-ice activity * Meeting of coaches (including coaching strategy for goalie(s)) * Introduction to classroom sessions with the players * Identification of tournaments * Discuss the 24hour rule and team discipline. |
| Assessment of players   * Including discussion with players about their goals | * Dry land training, first set of practices and first team building event * Discussions with players, trainer, and Manager |
| Ice time - Fair Ice | A “fair ice” policy will be applied throughout the full season. **This means we will roll all lines for all games and all situations through the entire season (including special teams).** The only exception to this rule may be in games where the coaches feel something needs to be done in the last 2 minutes of the game in order to advance in playoff or tournament games only. |
| Team fitness (Get players in shape) | Identify dryland training regime to commence end of July and involve players as much as possible in this process and in facilitating sessions if deemed necessary. |
| Basic skill development | Practices emphasize the basics and individual skills: power skating, puck handling and shooting |
| Organize select exhibition games | Identify coaches/teams that share similar goals for exhibition games |
| Attend season schedule | Ensure schedule is spaced out properly across the months; avoid far distance travel during winter months to greatest extent possible. |
| Identify call up players/goalies | Discussions with UXX Head Coach |
| Developing mental preparation | Using mentors/role models to review key concepts |

1. **Regular Season (October-January)**

Skill development and positive learning

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| **Objectives** | **How it will be achieved** |
| Identify team and individual performance goals | Discussions with coaches and with players |
| Goalie development | Goalie specific training: goalie drills incorporated into team practices |
| Maintain physical conditioning of players | Discuss the importance of off-ice conditioning. |
| Developing individual skills and tactics | Appropriate drills in practices; use of guest coaches |
| Building team tactics | Zone entry and zone exit strategies, face offs, Transition, Positional support. This will also be achieved through classroom sessions. |
| Team building opportunities | Out-of-town tournament/team meals and activities |
| Evaluation of team/player performance | Coach/Player/Parent meeting. |

1. **Playoffs and Provincial Play downs (February-April)**

Review of concepts and fine tuning

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| **Objectives** | **How it will be achieved** |
| Take stock of players’ physical and mental health | * Discussions with players, trainers, and parents * Player observations |
| Raise intensity level to compete in playoffs | High tempo practices; practice drills involving competition; discussions with players on how to handle adversity and nerves |
| Review key concepts taught over course of season | Practice drills that allow application of multiple concepts; discussions with players |
| Fine tune skills and team tactics | Practices |
| Ensure playoff and playdown games are spaced out as much as possible | Attention to scheduling |
| Team solidarity | Off-ice social event |

Competitive hockey requires a commitment of time, effort, and money. Our team will have activities, on average, 3 to 4 times per week throughout the season. All team activities – games, practices, dry-land, and classroom sessions will be mostly mandatory. Our team should be your player’s top priority - behind only family commitments and schoolwork. While having a job is important for some at this age, I want to be clear that players are expected to plan accordingly and advise their employer of their commitment to hockey 1st. Occasionally a conflict will result in missing a practice or a game however, the expectation is that you should attend almost all practices.

The team will do its part by advising on the schedule as soon as it is available.      
   
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**Tournaments -** We will hopefully be participating in 5 or 6 tournaments this year. Likely 2-3 out of town and 2-3 local. Keeping in mind that some may not work out if the division is not offered.  
  
**Fees -** Our draft budget is for approximately $X,XXX per player (over and above registration  
fees and other associated costs such as travel, lodging etc...) This includes $XXX in team fees, $XXX through sponsorship and roughly $XXX through fundraising.  
  
**Equipment -**Players are responsible for having all the necessary CSA approved equipment as well as Team Jackets and players will have to acquire Stars pant shells upon making the team.  
  
If you have any questions about the information listed above, please don’t hesitate to contact me by email at ali.smith@myemailprovider.com.  
  
  
Allison Smith  
Head Coach

GCGH UXX EO Stars/Stars/Shooting Stars