

Junior Coaches, Information for the Coach

It can be hard for Junior Coaches to figure out where they fit into the team. Do they hang out with the players or do they hang out with the coaches? Ideally, the Head Coach should welcome the Junior Coach as part of the coaching team staff.

Each team dynamic and coaching staff will be different and have a different culture and different needs. It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to help the Junior Coach to bridge this gap by introducing them to the team and working with them to establish their roles and responsibilities.

- Set up an **introduction meeting to welcome your Junior Coach** and learn about their ringette experience.
- Work with your Junior Coach to **identify what goals they have** for their role this season.
- **Clearly communicate** how you plan to use them during practices and games.

Whether this is your first time with junior coaches, or have several years of experience, keep the following in mind when working with junior coaches on your team:

- The Head Coach is **responsible** to ensure a safe and effective training environment at all times and is therefore responsible for the actions of the Junior Coach.
- As head and assistant coaches, part of your responsibility is to **mentor** the Junior Coaches.
- Junior Coaches **DO NOT** replace mandatory, fully certified female coaches who must be at least 18 years of age.
- Junior coaches are on your TRF (Team Registration Form) and can be marked on the game sheet. It does not affect the Minimum/Maximums on the bench during games.
- Coaches, including Junior Coaches, **should never be alone with athletes at any time**, including in the dressing room. Junior Coaches should also not be alone with Coaches at any time, this is the responsibility of both the Coach and the Junior Coach.
- Unless agreed to by the majority of parents, travel expenses for Junior Coaches are not the responsibility of the team.
- Junior Coaches have a lot of experience relevant not only to ringette but to team-building and are often able to relate much more easily to your athletes than you can.
- They are role models and future coaches.
- Include them in decision-making, and ask for their input and ideas both on and off the ice.
- *Some will take more encouragement than others to speak up*, but they're there because they love ringette and want to share it.
- Please **DO NOT** reduce them to pylon-pushers, they have so much more to offer. Involve them by having them demonstrate drills, assist with running a skill station, or eventually planning and running a drill in each practice. Ask them to assist on the bench during games and provide their insight. Ask them to take part in team-building events and encourage them to provide ideas -- they have been part of many team-building events over the years!
- **Fun Tip:** Take your team to watch the Junior Coach play. Your kids can make posters to cheer on their junior coach! Ask if the team can participate in the dressing room pre-game. This is a great learning opportunity and fun for all.

Though they are often busy and attendance can be impacted by their other commitments, they are young, and learning to balance the demands on their time.

They are also often still reliant on parents or other family/friends to get them to team activities.

