

Kam Ballas - Apex Wellness Skill Development

The 2023-24 season marked the second year that I was able to work with VMH on skill development, for all of the U11 and older teams. There were a number of positives that came out of it, but also some aspects that I would like to change for this season. If your team would like assistance with either on-ice or off-ice development, I can definitely help out.

On-Ice Development

For this season, I'd like to focus more on small group sessions and 1-1 work with each player. Last year, one of the challenges I had was trying to improve each players' skill, while running the entire practice for a whole team. This is what I'd focus on at each practice this year:

- Work with 3-5 players at one end of the rink and rotate players out every 10-15 minutes.
- The skills we work on can be the coaches, players, or my choice at each practice.
- We can be creative with how we choose small groups.
 - I can work with specific forward lines, defence, or even players needing help with the same skill.
- Small-area games can be done as a team at the end of practice, or mixed in throughout a whole practice.
 - Small area games are important because they provide more contextual learning, allow more players to be involved (which reduces time spent standing in line), simulate actual game scenarios, and are more fun!
- I can also assist with teaching specific systems and game scenarios to teams when and where they require it.
 - I can help with powerplay, penalty kill, and any systems work, especially as teams get closer to the playoffs.

My focus for skill development this season is:

- Foundational skills like skating, shooting, passing.
- Position-specific skills for forwards and defence
- Hockey IQ work-understanding how to read and make plays and becoming a critical thinker on the ice.
- Allowing players to have the opportunity and environment to be creative and make mistakes as they learn.

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Off-Ice Development

For teams that would like additional off-ice training, it sounds like we would have access in the room above the rink. All workouts would be bodyweight-based, and would aim to improve each players strength, mobility, and coordination. For workouts to be effective, they must be performed at a high intensity, which if done before a practice, can significantly affect players technique and skill learning ability. Workouts done before practice should be done on days where the practice is more competition-based, rather than skill-based. Workouts would be:

- 30 minutes maximum
- Ideally done before practice
- Scheduled on weeks with a lighter workload
- Bodyweight exercises with a focus on strength, mobility and coordination

My rates for both on and off-ice work for the 2024/25 season is:

- \$125/session for on-ice
- \$50/session for off-ice

For players wanting extra workouts or further strength development, I also own Apex Wellness and teach strength training to individuals. It is a small space, so I can train 2 clients at once, so any coaches or players with any interest or questions can contact me for more info.

If you have any further questions regarding programming or would like to meet to create a plan for your team for the season, do not hesitate to reach out. I can be reached at (780) 214-9975.

I look forward to working with VMH this season!