HOCKEY COACH'S CHECKLIST

Keep this checklist on your clipboard and review the list before or after hockey practices, meetings, or any encounter with the athletes you coach. All these steps will become second nature in time, and then you'll be a great coach.



- [ ] **Set your goals**. Spend time before the season starts to consider your hopes, expectations, and priorities for yourself and your team. Write them down.
- [ ] **Be prepared.** Use your goals to plan your overall season including what you want to accomplish monthly, weekly, and daily in practices and games.
- [ ] **Carry a positive attitude**. Every day, bring an upbeat attitude to the team and to each player you deal with on the team.
- [ ] **Dispense positive reinforcement.** Catch players doing things right. When you do, you reinforce the behavior and performance you want.
- [ ] **Provide motivation.** Motivation comes from within the individual players, not from your "Rah! Rah!" speeches. Fun and praise pave the most direct route to motivated players.
- [ ] **Instill pride.** You want your players to wear your team jersey with pride every day. Develop a team reputation that they can all feel proud of.
- [ ] **Show confidence**. Confidence comes from knowing what you're doing and that you can do it. Educate yourself; become knowledgeable about the game. Ask questions. Learn.
- [ ] **Cultivate good work habits.** Lead by example on this one. Do your homework; come to practices and games prepared. Work tirelessly with the kids and help them discover that a little hard work pays off in spades.
- [ ] **Cultivate positive self images.** Help players believe in themselves so that they can feel great about themselves as players and as people.
- [ ] **Provide great practices**. Have players moving, participating, succeeding, learning, and laughing.
- [ ] **Balance game coaching.** Make games fun and positive at the same time as players learn from their experiences.

- [ ] **Be safety conscious.** Be medically informed about those you're working with. Check equipment and facilities. Know emergency procedures.
- [ ] **Show respect.** Everyone you work with deserves to be shown some respect. That includes the players, parents, officials, and your assistants. Respect sets a tone for the team.
- [ ] **Teach and challenge.** Start simple. Progress step-by-step. Know where the kids are in their skills so that you can lead them a little further forward and reward them for getting there.
- [ ] **Pay attention.** Every kid wants to feel valued in some way. Talk to the kids. Know their names. Find out something unique about them. Point out something they do well, daily.
- [ ] **Set a great example.** Lead by example in attitude, enthusiasm, and sportsmanship. Your team, and even most parents, will follow.
- [ ] Control the parents. Lead. Set rules and consequences. Clearly communicate those rules and consequences. Do not waver from what you set and communicate. But have fun with them as much as possible.
- [ ] **Dispense discipline.** Make sure all players know that the team comes first. Anything that disrupts or hurts the team or individual team members is not acceptable. Make sure that they know the consequences of unacceptable behavior and dole it out when necessary, with consistency.
- [ ] **Use your creativity.** Be adaptable and creative when things don't work out as you expected. Design your own drills. Find tricks to help kids learn. Adjust in lousy facilities. You'll all get more out of the experience.
- [ ] **Have fun.** Coaching should be a great experience for you too!

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