



The following is an excerpt taken from a Coaches manual put together by the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association and the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1959. It is amazing to see that with the rule and technological changes over the years that the role of the coach has changed very little.

The Coach

What is the attraction that draws an individual into the realm of coaching amateur hockey? Whether it is a genuine desire to help others play, or simply the appeal of the game, an experience in coaching carries with it immeasurable rewards. A deep and lasting satisfaction awaits the man who, as the season progresses, watches his charges improve and develop as a team of his own making. There is something of the builder, the creator, in every coach which in itself is a source of great enjoyment.

Player management and the building of team spirit are closely associated with the personality and character of the coach. If he is to get the most out of his players, he must be able to command their loyalty and respect. As their leader, he is in a position to control their conduct on the ice and to instill in them the right attitudes towards rules, referees, deliberate injuries, dirty plays and penalties. When coaches recognize their responsibility to practice sportsmanship, the game retains its skill, finesse and speed. Rough, dirty play, deliberate injuries, and referee baiting with its accompanying violence among fans and other such abuses could quickly sound the death knell amateur hockey.

Since coaches are the guardians of the ethics of the game, it is their responsibility to see that hockey keeps its rightful place as a truly great sport.

How the coach reacts to the team's wins and losses will definitely affect his relationship with his players. It is only human nature to like winning and hate losing. A coach commands real loyalty if he gives the credit to his players when they win and shares their disappointment when they lose. The important thing about losing is to look forward to the next game with some constructive thinking, rather than to brood over the loss while looking for a scapegoat.

No coach ever knows enough about the game of hockey. By reading, by discussions with others, and by observing good teams play, new techniques and tactics can always be learned. There is no better way to improve one's knowledge of skills and methods of coaching than by attending clinics where a free interchange of ideas and instructional demonstrations take place.



The coach of beginning players has special problems requiring a different approach from that of handling experienced players. To overcome such learning obstacles as awkwardness due to rapid and uneven growth, discouragement because of consistent failure, it is necessary to get to the beginner's level. The emphasis should be almost entirely on fundamentals with frequent encouragement in mastering one thing at a time without expecting too much. Judgement and common sense will dictate how much team play should be given. In learning skills, a pattern built up by drills become habits which in time form the automatic responses so essential in hockey. Injuries due to lack of skill in executing difficult techniques tend to develop fear resulting in tension, which impedes success. Tension may also be built up by the fear of failure and the coach's attitude toward costly mistakes. The bigger only learns to relax when he feels the coach understands his difficulties and will correct his errors in a helpful way. The rules of the game must be taught at the outset, particularly with respect to legal bodily contact. The coach should continually keep before beginners the thought that the rules are mutual agreements to be kept in spirit as well as in letter. Their natural enthusiasm can in this way be channeled into fairness and sportsmanship from the beginning. It is a regrettable mistake for the coach to concentrate on the few best players neglecting others merely for the sake of winning games. The farsighted coach recognizes the lasting values for all who are just learning to play.

The complaint is frequently heard that the rules of amateur hockey are being too loosely interpreted, with the result that rough play is considered part of the game. The solution is simple: if coaches of all teams in a league would sit down with the referees before the season begins, go over the rules and lay down clear cut interpretations on such controversial issues as boarding, charging, high sticking, fighting, etc., the problem could easily be solved. Strict and literal interpretation off the rules by the referees is possible only when the whole-hearted support of all the coaches is assured.

To sum up, in order to achieve the full benefits and satisfactions from a successful coaching experience, the coach must be:

- ◆ A hard worker
- ◆ Enthusiastic but patient
- ◆ A leader capable of commanding the loyalty and respect of his players by his understanding and interest in them as individuals
- ◆ A student of the game constantly seeking to increase his knowledge of its fundamentals, techniques and tactics
- ◆ An organizer who plans and uses effective methods to get across to his players what he knows of the game
- ◆ Active in developing good sportsmanship.