



“After you walk into dressing rooms following game losses and wins and see and feel the difference in the atmosphere of the room and the players’ demeanors, you will have no doubt that to the players winning is fun and pretty important... but...”

COACHING LEADERSHIP – WHAT IS REAL WINNING?

Having fun playing amateur hockey by playing a game, having a physical workout, interacting with team mates and creating new friends is usually a basic goal for the players on any team, and their parents, no matter how many games the team wins or loses.

But having this kind of “fun” is not normally the only goal of players and parents.

For most players and parents, developing physical and mental hockey skills and winning games go hand in hand with “having fun”.

And besides “having fun”, many parents recognize one other most important dimension that in part comes from playing a team sport like hockey even though the value may not be apparent to the players at the time. This is the players’ personal and character development, including self confidence and self esteem.

This dimension is however very important to most parents and for the players too when they look back on their minor hockey experiences. Hopefully players as they go through their lives will utilize and pass on some of the good things they’ve learned while playing hockey in non hockey situations. And hopefully they will understand and not buy into some of the bad things that are part of the game especially at the professional level.

So “real winning” for a player in the short and longer term includes having fun, feeling good, getting exercise, making friendships, winning games, learning sportsmanship, playing within the rules, developing physical and mental hockey skills, developing character and personally, learning how to be a team player and dealing with winning and losing games with respect for the opposition and the referees.

Therefore, one of your goals as a coach is to deliver all aspects of “real winning” to your team and each individual on the team.

Personal and character development are nurtured largely from the “mental” skills side of playing hockey, although developing self confidence, self esteem, and respect for rules, team mates, coaches, the hockey association and referees comes from all aspects.

The “mental” skills that are nurtured include learning more about:



“Strategy” – understanding that planning ahead in broad terms the kinds of systems the team can execute to be successful is important

“Tactics” – understanding that the detail is important in what you need to know to execute the strategy

“Thinking” – understanding you need to do this to execute the tactics at the right time and in the right circumstances

“Listening” – understanding you need to do this when you are trying to learn something and it is more important than you talking

“Communicating” – understanding that to plan and execute plays with your line mates is just about impossible without some kind communication on or off the ice even if very subtle like making eye contact when you expect the puck to be passed

“Positioning” – understanding that in a team game everyone has their important role and that being out of position to fulfill an individual goal hurts the team

“Team puck control” – understanding that a team can succeed in keeping puck possession a lot longer than any individual can

“Hard work” – understanding that without great effort not very much will be accomplished

“Tenacity” – understanding that when you doggedly try and don’t give up easily, much more is usually accomplished

“Anticipation” – understanding that people’s actions can be reasonably predicted under certain circumstances if you bother to think and understand them

“Desire” – understanding that a lot starts with simply wanting to get the puck

“Passion” – understanding that new levels of achievement can sometimes be attained if you care enough about accomplishing something

“Discipline” – understanding that sometimes for the betterment of the team you have to dedicate yourself to do things that you really don’t want to do but need to do to get better



“Courage” – understanding that you have to overcome your fear of failure or physical contact sometimes to accomplish what you want

“Adversity” – learning to positively react to adversity

So, as a coach, nurture “real winning”. You will be contributing much more than just winning games.