

As a coach, you have a major influence on your athletes. Not only will you affect the development of their skills and long-term enjoyment of the sport, you will also play a role in their development as individuals. It is important that you have effective resources to help you.

The Coaching Association of Canada, in partnership with the national sport organizations, compiled the following coaching tips.

Equal and Fair Ice Time



Do you ensure that your players receive equal and fair ice time?

All players deserve equal and fair ice time during games and practices. Players play for fun, and would rather get equal and fair ice time on a losing team than sit on the bench of a winning one.

As a coach, you have a responsibility to encourage players to be the best they can be, and provide equal opportunities for them to develop self-esteem and sport skills. When you play your talented athletes more often, you make other players feel less important and deny them the chance to improve their skills.

Hockey is an excellent vehicle to make players feel valued and experience success.

Here are some suggestions:

- Expose all players to special situations (power plays, penalty killing): experiencing both success and failure in these situations is part of sport.
- Provide players opportunities to assume leadership roles by allowing all to be a captain or an assistant during the season.
- When planning practices, ensure that all players are always active during every drill and avoid games involving elimination: no-one learns anything by standing around.
- If players, parents or support staff resist your efforts to provide equal icetime, remind them to keep the game in perspective: players play for fun, fitness, and to develop life and hockey skills.

Winning games can be fun, but not when it deprives players of equal and fair ice time. Give everyone a chance, be supportive and patient, and hockey will be more rewarding for you and your players.

