

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.

Releasing Players



One of the toughest tasks a coach faces is telling players they did not make the team. Although difficult, releasing players must be approached with planning and sensitivity to ensure try-outs are a growth experience, not one which damages players' self-esteem.

The first step is effective planning of your try-out sessions. Develop a clear player selection plan, taking into consideration the number of players, the qualities you are looking for, how to evaluate these qualities, and the ice-time available.

Once your plan is in place, inform players and parents of all details. Outline your player selection plan, including evaluation criteria, objectives of drills and scrimmages and timelines for selection. Clear communication here will prevent misunderstandings later.

Before you make decisions to release players, develop a clear plan to inform them. Never post a list or read the names of players to be released in front of the team. Always meet with each player individually.

Here are suggestions for these meetings:

- Be honest and straightforward: tell players why they did not make the team, identifying strengths and weaknesses.
- Invite questions and provide players with constructive feedback to guide further improvement.
- Don't make future promises: direct players to other teams, thank them for their efforts, and encourage them to work hard and improve.
- After releasing players, be prepared to answer questions from parents. Be honest and straightforward with parents, and avoid confrontations.

Remember, try-outs are a vehicle to place players on teams where they will benefit most. Releasing players is never easy, however, it's really important to meet with players one-on-one!

