

## HOW CAN COACHES BUILD SELF-ESTEEM & TEAMWORK?

Videotape a few practices and games early in the season and then again at the end of the year. Use this to show your players how they've improved both as players and as a team. You can also take a look at yourself and see if you've done a good job.

Engage your players in team-building activities. Whether you throw a pizza party or organize formal team-building exercises, it is important to remember that the coach is primarily responsible for developing the camaraderie that all great teams possess. When the game is on the line, success many times is determined by the team that has the most confidence in each other.

**“ In hockey, you can't reach the summit as an individual. It takes teamwork to reach the summit. ”**

**Ron Wilson**

1998 and 2010 U.S. Olympic Men's Ice Hockey Coach



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## THIS IS USA HOCKEY

USA Hockey, Inc., is the National Governing Body for the sport of ice hockey in the United States. Its mission is to promote the growth of hockey in America and provide the best possible experience for all participants by encouraging, developing, advancing and administering the sport.

USA Hockey's primary emphasis is on the support and development of grassroots hockey programs. In January 2009, the organization launched the American Development Model, which - for the first time ever - provides associations nationwide with a blueprint for optimal athlete development.

While youth hockey is a main focus, USA Hockey also has vibrant junior and adult hockey programs that provide opportunities for players of all ability levels. The organization also supports a growing disabled hockey program and maintains an inline hockey program to provide structure and support for its growth across the nation.

Beyond serving those who play the game at the amateur level, USA Hockey has certification programs for coaches and officials to ensure education standards are met that coincide with the level of play. Furthermore, a large focus is put on parent education with equipment needs, rules of the game and parental roles in youth sports among common topics.

Members of the organization are entitled to many benefits, including a subscription to *USA Hockey Magazine*, the most widely circulated hockey publication in the world; excess accident, general liability and catastrophic insurance coverage; access to USAHockey.com; and opportunities to participate in USA Hockey National Championships, as well as player development camps.

USA Hockey is the official representative to the United States Olympic Committee and the International Ice Hockey Federation. In this role, USA Hockey is responsible for organizing and training men's and women's team for international tournaments, including the IIHF World Championships and the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Closer to home, USA Hockey works closely with the National Hockey League and the National Collegiate Athletic Association on matters of mutual interest.

USA Hockey is divided into 12 geographical districts throughout the United States. Each district has a registrar to register teams; a referee-in-chief to register officials and organize clinics; a coach-in-chief to administer education program for coaches; a risk manager to oversee liability and safety programs; and a skill development program administrator to facilitate learn-to-play programs for youth players and their parents.



# TEAMWORK

*Individuals sign autographs.  
Individuals endorse products.  
Individuals grant interviews.  
Teams win championships.*

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## WHAT IS TEAMWORK?

The dictionary defines teamwork as a number of persons acting in close association as members of a unit. This describes the sport of hockey – ice and inline – perfectly. Many sports can be dominated by individuals, but hockey requires a team. Even the very best players need support and help from their teammates. The best players must also be able to fit within the team framework if they and their team expect to be successful.

**T**ogether  
**E**veryone  
**A**chieves  
**M**ore

## WHAT WILL TEAMWORK TEACH ME?

Teamwork helps you develop characteristics that will make you successful both on and off the playing surface. You learn to:

- Care about others
- Work with others
- Adapt to difficult situations
- Be unselfish
- Be responsible and dependable
- Develop self-discipline

## HOW DO I BECOME A GOOD TEAM PLAYER?

It's not easy to learn how to be a good teammate and many times it takes years to get the message. After reading this, you will have a better understanding of how successful hockey players view teamwork.

Every team has a variety of players with different abilities. It is up to the coach to determine a player's strengths and weaknesses and use them in the best manner that assures the team will be successful. As a player, you must accept the role the coach has given you. Not everyone can be the leading scorer or the best defenseman. Know what the coach expects from you and then go out and do it. It takes everyone doing their job for the team to be successful.

Sometimes players are unhappy with their role and become jealous of teammates. Don't fall into that trap. You must always hope your team does well. Unhappy players can be a distraction and distractions usually spread, resulting in an unhappy, losing team. Occasionally, parents will get into the act by telling their child they should be on the power play or playing on a line with different players. Parents can be jealous of other players, too. If you want a different

role, work hard in practice to improve your skills and the coach will use you differently. But remember, coaches are more likely to cut players who won't accept their role or be a team player. There has never been a successful team without unselfish role players.

When the 2009 U.S. Women's National Team and the 2004 U.S. National Junior Team won the IIHF World Championship, they had great players who were all used to playing on the power play and being the best on their team. But they won because they were willing to play the role the coach asked of them. They played as a team and they played for each other. Those are great examples of teamwork.

## WHAT OTHER THINGS DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TEAMWORK?

**HOCKEY IS A GAME OF MISTAKES.** Don't get down on your teammates when they make a mistake. Instead, let them know you're still behind them. When you make a mistake, admit it. Your teammates will respect you for it and you will be less likely to repeat the mistake. Don't try to rationalize your play by blaming others. It's important to understand that you win as a team and lose as a team. Always stand up for each other. Most successful people are givers, and they are also happy people.

**TEAM GOALS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN INDIVIDUAL GOALS.** Are you happy when you played well but the team did poorly? That's not the mark of a good teammate because it's selfish. Teamwork requires unselfishness. If you are the star player, you shouldn't expect to be treated differently than the other players. You have to play within the team framework and be team-oriented if you want your teammates to look to you as a leader. Remember – there is no "I" in TEAM.

**TEAMWORK MEANS YOU HAVE DISCIPLINE.** Lots of players will take bad penalties that hurt their team. Players who want to win won't hurt their team in this way. They put the team ahead of themselves. When you are in the penalty box, take a look at the game and see the tough situation you have put your teammates in.

**GOOD TEAMMATES ARE DISCIPLINED AWAY FROM THE GAME, TOO.** Good teammates live right and are good people. They don't do anything that would embarrass their teammates, coaches or parents. If the team is traveling, they show good manners in hotels and restaurants. People are complimenting them, not shunning them.

**TEAMWORK COMES DOWN TO ATTITUDE.** The biggest skill you have is not passing, skating or shooting, but how you use your head and heart. You should play because you love to compete. Working hard as a team to accomplish the unthinkable is the best feeling in the world. When you are really a team that works together and cares about each other, you know a special feeling that is unique to team sports. After your biggest win, you can just look at your teammates, smile and appreciate what a wonderful feeling it is. No words need to be spoken. This is why when professional players retire, the thing they say they miss the most is the relationships with their teammates. Team play is about giving and sharing.

## HOW ABOUT THE COACH?

The coach has the ultimate responsibility to mold his or her players into a team. It oftentimes can be very difficult, but to be successful you must help your players understand the concept of teamwork.

Most players want to be the best player on the team. A coach's job is to help players become not the best on the team, but the best they can be. Treat players with respect, listen to their input and remember that you can learn from them as well. This is essential if you are to know your players and help them bond as a team. If they believe that you listen to them, they will respect your decisions and follow your lead.

Explain to each player his or her role. You can't expect a player to perform as you would like if you don't convey your expectations. Communication is extremely important to create a team atmosphere. You must care more about your players than your own personal goals and realize that you can have a huge influence on the players and their lives.

### OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Accept that players will make mistakes. Any mistake that is made when a player is trying his/her hardest should be tolerated. Don't dwell on negatives – remember that positive reinforcement creates confidence.
- If a coach loses his/her composure, so will the team. A good coach is one who can remain calm and pull the team together. You must create a belief amongst your team members that they will persevere and come out on top.
- Most coaches say they don't have favorite players, but as humans we know this isn't possible. While it is natural to admire and respect some athletes more than others, it is essential that you treat all your players fairly and with respect.
- Always be truthful with your players and yourself. Coaches make mistakes too! Admit mistakes just as you would expect your players to.

