

NORTH SHORE INLINE HOCKEY COACH'S HANDBOOK

2019 SEASON
www.NSIHL.com



NSIHL COACH'S HANDBOOK

An important note from the North Shore Inline Hockey League (NSIHL)

This purpose of this handbook is to provide coaches and managers with important information and guidance to help them achieve the NSIHL's foundational goals of skill development, teamwork and good sportsmanship.

The NSIHL strives to improve each player's skill level, and enhance their enjoyment of the game, while helping them to develop both mentally and physically.

The league would like to thank Brennen Mclean for the time and effort put forth in creating this coaching and manager's handbook.



Important!

This Handbook is not a replacement for the rules.

This handbook is not a replacement for the NSIHL Rulebook. The current Roller Hockey Canada / Hockey Canada Rules (where applicable), will govern all games played by the NSIHL unless they are superseded by a change made specifically by the organization.

The addition, deletion, and modification of the NSIHL house rules are a continuous work in progress by the league's Board of Directors.

It's expected that all participants become familiar with the changes outlined in the NSIHL Rulebook. No allowances will be made for the ignorance of the rules. League Managers and Directors assume no responsibility for any claims arising through the operation of the League and its functions. The Coach's Handbook will assist coaches in their duty of being role models and mentors, and to help coach the participants to the best of their ability.

For more information and to see the NSIHL rulebook, visit www.nsihl.com



NSIHL Coach and Managers Handbook

Introduction

This handbook is an ongoing work in progress and will evolve over time. We'll need your help to improve upon what's here. Suggestions for improvements or changes can be sent to the League Manager, Jason Granholm at leaguemanager@nsihl.com.

This handbook is not intended to be an iron-clad approach to coaching or managing in the NSIHL. Its purpose is to serve as a supporting document for the people in the coaching and managing roles. Use what you need when you need it and don't hesitate to ask questions by email at leaguemanager@nsihl.com.

Thank you for volunteering to help coach or manage this season. Your time and effort are so valuable to NSIHL participants and their families. Remember to create a fun environment for the kids and enjoy your time as coaches and managers!

A note about the structure of the handbook: Generally speaking, the information herein has been structured to follow the timeline of the NSIHL season. The idea is that you will be able to tackle the things you need to as they come up through the course of the season.

Please take the time to read the whole handbook at the start of the season and then you'll have a frame of reference as the year progresses.



Pre-Season and Draft

The last week before the puck drops each season in the NSIHL, the league holds a draft so that coaches in each division can select their teams from the pool of available players.

The league will notify you of your specific division's draft date and time. All important dates and times can also be found on the main web page, www.nsihl.com.

In advance of your draft night, notify any other coaches and manager who you'd like to have in the draft with you in advance. It's helpful to have more than one team official from each team at the draft if possible.

Prepare a list of your protected players in advance. Protected players are sons and daughters of your team's coaches and managers who will naturally play with your team. You may be asked to select these players first.

The draft itself is generally very well run and the league reps at the draft will take the time to explain how everything works so we won't cover further detail in these notes. If you would like to learn the rules of the draft in advance, please refer to the NSIHL rule book.

You will need to bring something to write on and write with. Make sure you keep a legible list of your team and keep track of the numbers of players that have been picked so that you don't miss a pick.

When the draft is complete, head to the equipment locker to meet the league's equipment manager Iggy Ghuman and pick up your equipment.

- Team jerseys in zipped jersey bag
- Full sets of league supplied goalie gear include:
 - Goalie pads
 - Chest protector
 - Blocker
 - Catching glove
 - Throat protector
 - Goalie stick
- Water bottle holder with 12 roller hockey pucks

You are personally responsible for the well-being of this equipment and its safe return at the end of the year so make sure you're organized! More on that later.



Preparing for the Season

Shortly after the draft, the league will send you an official team list with player name and contact information. Send out an email to your team as soon as you can. Sample email text is below.

Hello Pee Wee Rec players and parents. Welcome to a new NSIHL season. My name is Brennen. Myself and Mike will be coaching team one this year. We are really looking forward to getting things underway,

Here's what's happening.

1st practice: Sunday at 2:45 pm KMA

2nd practice: Wednesday at 6 pm KMA

We need to fill the following volunteer positions. Please email me if you can help.

Uniform Manager - bring uniforms to and from rink each game – it's recommended that they are washed after every second game.

Team Manager - handle team communications and some league communications.

Thanks in advance to volunteers! Please phone or email with questions. Otherwise see you all at the rink tomorrow. Please let me know if you're not attending.

Cheers, Brennen

FirstName LastName

email@email.com

604-XXX-XXXX

Important items to cover in your email:

- Date and time for first couple of practices and or games
- Ask for volunteers for any unfilled positions
 - Assistant or co-coaches
 - always good to have two regular coaches at a minimum and a third regular coach or back up coach to cover for coach absences etc.
 - Uniform manager
 - sometimes good to split this role up over a couple of families over the course of the season.
 - Team manager
 - such an important role!
 - keep badgering parents by email until someone volunteers!

Coach Eligibility Requirements

Note that all coaches need to have completed the Respect In Sport online certification and a criminal record check, and these must both be submitted to the league by the April 30 deadline. Information and links for completing this certification are provided on the NSIHL website.



Two Key Contacts for Coaches and Managers

As an NSIHL volunteer coach or manager, you have two key contacts when you have questions or concerns of any type.

1. Your Division Liaison. This person is assigned to your division in particular and their role is to manage requests, answer questions and provide guidance to the teams in their division. You should receive an email from the league with your Division Liaison's contact information. You should also be told who this person is at your draft.
2. You can also reach out to the League Manager at any time but keep in mind that the League Manager receives a great deal of email traffic so you may realize a quicker response time when you contact your Division Liaison.

Your role as head coach or co-head coach is, among other things, to be responsible for conduct of the team and its volunteers.

If at any time, you witness or hear about conduct that is concerning to you, please contact the league manager leaguemanager@nsihl.com.

The Team Manager Role

This role is crucial to the success of your team. As mentioned previously, make sure to approach parents by email or otherwise to try to find a volunteer manager. If you have trouble, advise the NSIHL mentor coach.

Your team manager should help you with the following:

- Team communications by email
 - Game and practice times
 - Any updates throughout the season
- Ensuring EPACT information is available to the team's representative. EPACT connects a player's network with the league to securely share emergency information to be able to communicate in the event of a crisis.
- Communication with the league by email
- Organizing uniform volunteers

Make sure to stay in close touch with your Team Manager so that you can help each other stay organized and create a great season for your team.

The league encourages teams to use some sort of team management and scheduling applications for their games, practices or events. TeamSnap is by far the most widely used by North Vancouver parents.

Here are some sample email communications that you and your manager can use as a reference:

Hi Team,

I have been 'volunteered' to manage by the coaches; Ross and Greg. Originally I think it was to manage them but I think managing the team as a whole is a better idea!

My name is Carole Richford and I am the wife of Greg McKenzie, mother of Jacob McKenzie.

I have not managed inline before (and if someone is dying to do it please let me know!) but have been a hockey manager for many years.



A few things:

1. Practice tonight at 9pm!
2. Please return this email with your child's name; parent(s) names and any additional email addresses.
3. Please include your child's cell phone number (if we need to do a mass text)
4. Please include one contact number for family
5. I will be setting up a TeamSnap account for game reminders. PLEASE use this to mark availability. If you need to contact us last minute, please use our cell phones (numbers below).
6. Our first few games are: Friday April 3rd, 9pm
 Sunday April 5th, 5:45pm
 Saturday April 11th, 9pm
 Sunday April 12th, 4:45pm

All are at Karen Magnussen Arena unless told otherwise.

Coaches:

Fred Flinstone: 604-555-1212
Barney Rubble: 604-555-1234
Joe Rockhead TBC

Jerseys:

*Must be handed in at the end of every game. They're not to be taken home by players under any circumstances..
A huge thank you to Bamm Bamm's mom, (Betty) for taking on this job.*

Games:

*Please be in the dressing room 20-25mins before game time.
Bring water bottle*

Looking forward to a fun season of inline hockey!

Wilma
604-555-4321
wilma@bedrock.ca

Hi everyone,

Just a reminder that we play tomorrow night at 9pm then as follows:

*Saturday, April 11th at 1:00pm.
Wednesday, April 15th at 6:30pm
Friday, April 17th at 7:00pm
Saturday, April 25th at 4:00pm
Sunday, April 26th at 2:45 pm
You can always check the schedule at this link:*

<http://northshorestats.wttstats.pointstreak.com/players-leagues.html?leagueid=1319&seasonid=18872>

Thanks again to the Smiths and McCaw families for volunteering to manage the jerseys. Much appreciated!

*See you Friday,
Jackie*



Manager emails to team should include following information:

- Names and contact information for Coaches, Manager and Uniform Manager
- Note on jerseys
 - Jerseys are to be worn during all games, placed on a hanger after each game and left in the dressing room for the Uniform Manager to pick up and take home.
- Next one or two game and or practice times
- Request for additional contact information
- Link to team management and scheduling app
- Link to team page on NSIHL website - Pointstreak
- Player arrival time expectation before games and practices
- Notice if money needs to be collected to pay for Teamsnap or any other items crucial to team
- If Atom team - information on required equipment
 - Helmet with cage
 - Mouth guard (optional)
 - Inline hockey skates (not street skates and no brake stoppers)
 - Elbow pads
 - Gloves
 - Hockey or roller hockey pants
 - Shin guards
 - Hockey stick

First Game or Practice of Year

Introduce yourself, other coaches, manager and, uniform manager to the players and parents in the room.

Let everyone know that you're happy to be starting out the season and you look forward to having a fun year together.

Have the players introduce themselves one at a time. Be warm and welcoming.

List your 3 or 4 most important expectations you have of the players, families and the team. Some examples:

- Get to games and practices on time please
 - 15 minutes for practices
 - 25 minutes for games
- Sportsmanship - treat everyone in the building with respect
 - Teammates
 - Coaches
 - Managers
 - Opponents
 - Fans
 - Referees
 - League officials
 - Pass the puck
 - Have fun!



You can direct player's parents to be in the room or not. This is your choice for the better part. Typically, with younger age groups, Atom and Mite, parents should be in the room. In older age groups usually fewer parents will want to be in the room and you're welcome to ask them to be out of the room with 10 or 15 minutes left before the game.

Whether, you have parents in the room or not, you must establish a simple rule around conduct in the room. When you or other coaches are addressing the team, no one else should be talking. Some parents and players will test your resolve on this issue. Here are some words that can help in these situations:

"Can I please have everyone's attention for a minute? Parents, please hold off on talking to your kids for a moment while we go through a few key points here."

or

"I need all conversations to stop and everyone to leave their equipment alone for a second please."

Then just wait for second until everyone settles down. If you have any particular players or parents who don't cooperate, simply take them aside and let them know what's going on.

More helpful words:

Talking to player:

"Ryan, I know you guys are having lots of fun in the room. That's great. When I want to talk to the team, I need you to help me out by keeping quiet. I don't want to have to keep asking you to stop talking. Does that seem fair? What should I do if you don't stop talking next time I ask?"

Talking to parent:

"Jim, thank you so much for being in the room and helping out. As you can imagine, trying to talk to all the kids at once is tough. When you're talking to your son Connor, while I'm talking to the team, it creates a distraction. I can't concentrate and neither can the rest of the kids. Can I ask you to refrain from talking while I'm talking please?"

You can also tell parents that they are welcome to speak with you after games or by email.

Again, if you have any trouble with parents that you feel is beyond your ability to resolve or out of your comfort zone, simply contact your Division Liaison or the League Manager.

Jerseys

Hand out jerseys to players based on the numbers they request. Youngest players generally pick first or you can use your own system. Best to tell players what system is in advance to avoid upset.

Team Manager should record the jersey numbers so that they know who to contact if a certain numbered jersey is missing. It's good practice to count out jerseys after each game, by number, to keep track throughout season.

Team List

Make sure to have a team list on hand for the first couple of games. The scorekeepers at the games will enter the teams into the computer during the first game or two. It is important that you check the league website for player names and



jersey numbers to ensure accuracy after the first or second game. If you find any issues, make sure to bring the correction to the attention of the league manager as soon as possible. Inaccurate attendance on games sheets may affect players eligibility for playoff games.

Games and Practices General

In the dressing room before the game, or practice, take the time to visit with a handful of your players personally. Sit down next to them or across and get to know them a little. A few questions you can ask:

- What's their hockey background?
- How long have they been playing inline for?
- What are they doing over the summer?
- What other sports do they play?
- Favorite Canucks player?

Later in the season, you might ask them questions relating to your team:

- What do you like most about playing on our team?
- What do you think we could do differently?
- Would they like to play a different position?

Ultimately, your players are going to perform better if they feel like their coach is interested in them as people. You'll also know a little more about what makes them tick as players.

You don't have to get to every player every game. Try to get to every player once every 4 or 5 games throughout the year. They'll appreciate it and so will you!

Make sure to keep the room fun and light hearted most of the time. Let the kids play music for part of the time if they like. Encourage some laughs and good natured fun. Of course when it's time to talk about the game or practice, you can get a little more serious.

Balancing

The NSIHL uses team balancing to ensure that each team in each division has the opportunity to be competitive with other teams. Balancing is often necessary, it's effective in general terms and it can be imperfect at times. It's worthwhile to manage the expectation of your players, player families, coaches and managers.

One or two games into the season, your manager should send out a quick email about balancing and you or one of the other coaches should explain what it is in the room. Let players and families know that balancing is a reality of the league and that some players may need to move to other teams.

Some helpful words:

"Every year, the league reviews each division and makes some player moves to balance out the teams. The league wants to make sure that the teams are competitive and all the players have a chance to win some games. I would like all the players and families to know that we may have to move a player or two off of the team and take others onto the team. If are a part of any balancing, we'll wish our exiting players good luck and we'll welcome our new players. Let me know if you have any questions. Thanks everyone!"



Season Plans

Some coaches like to establish a season plan as the inline season gets underway. The benefit of a season plan is that it allows you to consider what you want the team and the players to have accomplished by the end of the season and it gives you a reference point to structure game plans and practice plans throughout the year.

At the younger ages, a good plan will ensure that the players are learning basic skills and concepts throughout the season and are improved by the end. In the older divisions, your plan may include teaching game strategy so that you can do well in the playoffs. No matter the case, a season plan is a great tool to rely on as you work with your players over the season. Some basic season plan elements:

- Key skills to work on
 - Skating
 - Forwards
 - Backwards
 - Stick handling
 - Passing
 - Shooting
- Strategy
 - Possession team
 - Make lesser skilled players better by engaging better skilled players as leaders
- Team rules
 - High level of sportsmanship
 - Provide feedback to your coaches

Practice Plans

It's very important to plan your practices in advance. Unplanned practices at their best are just busy time for the team and at their worst, cause the players to sit around while you try to figure out what to do.

A good approach to planning your practices is to come up with a few drills that meet your agenda and use one or two of them only depending on how the flow of the practice goes. Provide yourself with a couple of options.

How do you pick your agenda for the practice? Look at your season plan. Where are you strong based on your plan, where are you weak? Also, you can look at your most recent games. Where have you done well and where do you need to improve.

Often, you can develop your own drills based on intuition. Sit down with a pen and a few pieces of paper. What simple drill can you come up with that will help the kids develop the skills or the know how to do what your team needs? Give it a try. I promise it will be fun!



Running Your Practices

Let the players in the dressing room know what you're working on in practice. Ask them to please pay attention when you're talking out there and to work hard during the practice. Let them know you'll have some fun as well.

Practices should generally include some of the following four components:

- **Individual skill development**
 - For example:
 - Skating
 - Forwards
 - Backwards
 - Puck carrying
 - Shooting
 - Checking
- **Team skill development**
 - For example
 - Passing
 - One timers
 - Defending in pairs
- **Strategic play**
 - For example
 - Team shape
 - Team break outs
 - Team defending
- **Game drill or scrimmage**
 - For example
 - Star Wars for young kids
 - Coaches shoot pucks at kids skates and kids try to avoid getting hit
 - Freeze tag
 - Scrimmage for older kids
 - Add rules
 - 4 passes before shot
 - 1 touch no carries

Be sure to keep your practices simple and fun. Don't spend all your time talking to the kids. They'll get bored. The key to a good practice is action mixed in with a little bit of teaching. A rule of thumb is under two minutes talking before drills with the odd 30 second interjection here and there to reinforce main coaching points.

Coaching On Game Day

Game Planning

As a coach, it's your responsibility to have a game plan of some sort. What do you want the team to accomplish this game? Which players need to contribute in which way, etc.



Coming up with your simple game plan will help you focus on important aspects of your team's play and the play of individual players so that you can help the team improve. It's a good idea to think the game plan through and jot it down before you get to the rink. It can also be very helpful to ask other coaches and even some players for their feedback throughout the season to help you formulate good game and practice plans.

Pre-Game

Make sure to address team with 2-3 things you'd like them to work on during the game and try to keep your whole pre game chat to 3-4 minutes or less.

Remind your players to have fun and to be respectful to everyone in the building.

Your players need to be ready to go, with water and all their gear on 5 minutes before the preceding game ends. You'll want to have a coach or manager hold the kids at the door until one of your coaches or managers has double checked to ensure the game is over and the preceding teams have vacated the bench.

It's no fun finding out that your team's water bottles have all been taken in by the coach of the preceding team because your players came out to the bench early and mixed all their water bottles in with the outgoing team's.

Typical warm up consists of:

- Free skate no pucks
 - Forwards
 - Backwards
- Free skate with pucks
- St. Louis Drill
 - 1/2 ice drill
 - Players start out in two lines in each corner
 - 1st player in 1st line skates up boards to just below center ice before turning towards net
 - 1st player in 2nd line passes puck to skater for shot on net
 - 1st player in 2nd line then skates to just below center ice before turning towards boards
 - Repeat

Be sure to remind your players not to shoot the puck at the goalie's head during drills. Also remind players not to shoot the puck when goalie is turned around or players are behind the net during warm up.

End your warm up at least one minute before puck drop so that you can do a few important pre game things:

- Pre-game chat with team to get them fired up
- Assign positions
- Announce starting line up
- Let the players do a cheer
 - This is particularly important to the younger players and it's lots of fun!

During The Game

You are the leader of your team during games. Make sure to act like one. You have to be aware of what's happening on the playing surface and on your bench. Here are a few reminders:



- When possible, have coaches open and close gates for players
- Don't allow non-players or non-coaches on or around the bench
- Split your defense and forwards into even numbers or as close to even numbers as possible
 - The NSIHL is an equal playing time league
- Try to keep water off the floor in the bench area to avoid slipping etc.

It's important for coaches to maintain an ongoing dialogue with all the players so that the players know how they're doing. Following the 3-1 ratio that many coaching programs endorse, try to notice and mention 3 positive things each player has done during the last 2 or 3 shifts. Next pick 1 area the where player could do better and provide some encouragement and guidance in this area.

Remember to also keep it light on the bench. You want to maintain a fun environment and attitude with the players.

Some helpful words:

"Nick, good shift! I loved the way you hustled back on defense just before you came off. Also, way to be open in front the net with your stick down. Awesome! Now here's something you can try next shift. When our defense is carrying the puck out of our zone, make sure you head out towards the boards instead of standing in the center of the rink. That way, you'll get the puck more often and the bad guys won't steal it from us. Sound good?"

If a coach is so wrapped up in the game that there's very little dialogue with the players, then the coach is simply not doing their job. Every player on every team should be a part of one or two of the conversations outlined above, during each half. If you have 10 skaters on your team that means you should be having between 30 and 40 conversations like this per game.

In simple terms, this is your job. Keeping the kids informed, helping them improve and making them feel like part of the team.

Remember; always be talking to your players. My rule of thumb is to have 2-3 of these conversations with each player each half. It can be done!

At Half Time

The most important thing to remember at half time is to pay some attention to your goalie. Are they getting enough water? Are they having fun, feeling ok, etc.? You don't really get the chance to talk to your goalie that often during a game so this is your chance. Also, don't hesitate to ask them what they're seeing out there.

This is also a good time to remind your team of the 3 things you want them to work on and to make any adjustments to your strategy.

Post-Game

Be sure to have players do a handshake with the opposing team and also thank the refs with a handshake.

In the dressing room, review what went well according to pregame plan and what didn't. Emphasize the positive and particularly where lesser skilled players made an impact and acknowledge higher skilled players who helped their teammates succeed. Don't forget to thank the goalie as well.

Some helpful words:



“Good job today gang. Too bad we weren’t able to pull off the win. We did some things really well though. Before the game we asked you to back check. Our back checking today was way better than last game. Way to go! We also asked the forwards to be out on the boards when we’re carrying the puck out of our zone. Today, we did this a little bit but not enough. We’ll have to do better next time if we want to have more scoring chances. Overall, I’m glad we put in a good effort and it looked like you were having a lot of fun out there! Any questions or comments?”

Be sure to complete important post game tasks:

- Collect and account for all team jerseys
- Announce next game and/or practice time and place
- Assign a goalie for next game
- Thank parents for help getting kids to and from game on time

On Goalies

Some teams are able to draft a player who wants to play in net all season and has the skill to do it well. Other teams end up with no goalie and have to rotate goalie duty among the kids.

Often, many of your players will be reluctant to play in net. The reality is that someone has to do it and this is something your team must deal with.

For the younger age groups, typically there are a few kids who want to try goalie or even play several games in net. On the older teams, it may be more difficult to recruit goalies.

When you are short on volunteers, a good approach is to let the players know that this is a problem. Someone has to play in net and no one wants to do it. Then, let the players know that everyone’s going to have to take a turn in net. Maybe even two turns..... Finally, have fun with it. This is your secret weapon when it comes to recruiting goalies.

Have the whole team discuss the fact that you don’t have a full time goalie. Openly discuss the fact that often, players don’t want to play in net because they feel that they’re no good at it. Then, have the whole team share in a discussion in which it is agreed that all players are given permission by team mates to play terrible in net because the team doesn’t have a goalie. Instead of being mad about our goaltending being bad, we’re going to laugh about it. Once all the kids are bought in, make sure you do have fun with it. This is very important.

Some helpful words:

“Wow, ok, that was close. First of all, we were lucky to have won that game. We let in a few too many goals. By the way, thanks to our volunteer in net today.....Wes. He certainly wasn’t going to win any goaltending awards but he had a few hilarious saves and he put in a good effort today. Big round of applause please.....thank goodness we scored a few goals today. Good job all!!”

Make sure to always provide a little extra support to your goalies whether they’re full time, part time or one timers. This position can be pretty stressful and having a supportive coach helps.



Inline Strategy and Team Formation

Inline hockey is a team sport. Passing, possession and team defense are the most important concepts to teach your players.

Younger divisions have more practices than older ones. For the younger players, you will have the opportunity to develop some individual skills.

For the older divisions there are fewer practices so developing individual skills is challenging. Most of your players will improve their individual skill simply by playing the game all season.

There are many strategies and formations employed by inline coaches and we won't cover them all in this document. Instead, we'll look at a basic structure that beginner coaches can use as a foundation while they're coaching their teams and developing their coaching knowledge and skill.

Offense

Play starts with 1st defender who either carries the puck out of their own zone trying to avoid checkers or passes the puck up the boards to forwards who are either waiting on the boards or moving up the side boards on either side of the rink.

If 1st defender can get close enough for a good shot on net, at least one forward should converge on the net for screening and rebounds.

2nd defender supports 1st defender by remaining open for a pass should 1st defender get in trouble.

When forward receives pass from 1st or 2nd defender, they look for open forward to pass to in offensive zone or pass back to open defender.

As the puck makes its way over center ice, non-puck carrying forward goes to open spot for shot or to front of net to screen goalie.

Team forms diamond shape in offensive zone with player in front of net, one player on each of side boards and one player at center ice in the top area of the offensive zone.

Passing and moving to open areas can change orientation and shape of 4 offensive players as long as no two players are playing too close together.

The objective is to maintain possession and get lots of good shots on net.

Low percentage shots are discouraged as they typically result in turn overs.

Shots from the point are encouraged, back passes to open defense are encouraged and give and go passes are encouraged.

Screening the goalie works well when your team is getting shots on net.

It's important to encourage players not to attempt to deke through the whole opposing team all the time. Even if they're good players, this tactic becomes predictable and easier to defend against as the season progresses.



Defense

Defenders jockey the leading offensive player as they come into the defensive zone. The objective is to force the offensive player to the outside, reducing shots and passes.

When offensive players enter your defensive zone without the puck and ahead of the play, defenders must make sure they cover offensive players man-to-man so that they cannot receive a long pass and go in on the goalie alone.

Once offenders are set up in your zone, you want your team to play a man to man structure for the better part while keeping one of your defenders in front of the net at all times to clear out stray pucks, rebounds and opportunistic opponents.

At any time during the game, if your opponent takes over possession of the puck, all of your players must back check hard to catch up to the play and cover one of the opposing players. This is absolutely crucial. If your team doesn't back check, you will be much easier to score on.

Overall Team Play

Encourage individuals on your team to play a team style game. Higher-skilled players need to involve lesser-skilled players to bring the total team game up a level or two. When a lesser-skilled team plays as a team against a team full of higher-skilled individual players, often times, the lesser skilled team with the team game wins.

Passing and possession is the best way to build your team game.

Playoffs

Playoffs are potentially so much fun for the players but they also offer the opportunity for a lot of pressure and some disappointment. Be sure to maintain a positive, fun attitude with all the players throughout playoffs. Make sure your team is in a good headspace no matter what the outcome is.

You are the leader of the team and the person the kids are going to take their cues off of. Your positive attitude will go a long way towards them having fun during this time of the season.

Also, it's very important for you and your manager to be very vigilant around playoff schedules as the league posts game times on the fly at this time of year. You'll want to get communications out to players and parents on a timely basis.

End of Season

It is very important to thank your coaches, manager and uniform manager at this time of the season. As well, thank the kids. Let them know what a fun year you had and how much you enjoyed coaching them. Tell them you're looking forward to seeing them at the rink again next season.

Some of the younger teams put together a wrap up party of some sort so make sure you coordinate this in advance with your team manager if you choose to go this route.



At your last game, you want to get your equipment together and return it to the NSIHL equipment manager who should be on hand at the rink.

- Team jerseys in zipped jersey bag
- Full set of goalie gear
 - Goalie pads
 - Chest protector
 - Blocker
 - Catching glove
 - Throat protector
 - Goalie stick
- Water bottle holder with 12 roller hockey pucks

When the season is over, pat yourself on the back. Take a rest. You deserve it. Coaching takes a lot of time, personal commitment and energy. Remember, you are doing a great service to your community by coaching. Your work is valued and you should feel good about your contribution!!

On Difficult Players

When you have players who don't fall in line with the team plan or are confrontational with coaches, it makes coaching difficult and can take up a disproportionate amount of your time. In many cases, difficult players can be brought back in to line fairly easily. In cases where they can't, you can turn to the league for assistance.

Examples of difficult player behavior:

- Distracting others in room and or on bench and playing surface
- Swearing
- Persistent complaining about the play of others
- Intimidating or "chirping" other players
- Not following coaches instructions

As a coach, you can use benching to try to dissuade the difficult player from persisting but this is a difficult thing to do without attracting the attention of team mates and possibly causing humiliation. Certainly once a player has been warned several times, benching can be a last ditch effort to turn things around.

Here are some approaches that may help when you're facing a difficult player.

Try talking to the player away from the rest of the team (be sure to involve another coach if possible) to get the player's take on things. Ask them some questions around the particular behavior that's bothering you or upsetting the team in some way. Do they think the behavior is ok? Do they recognize that this is not acceptable behavior?

Sometimes, this discussion will do the trick. The player may realize that these behaviors are upsetting the coaches or the team and then decide to fall in line.

If you choose, you can ask the player to think about things from your perspective or the perspective of their team mates, the ref, etc. Then, reinforce that the behavior is unacceptable to and that you don't want to have to resort to consequences. Ask the player if they're willing to stop the behavior? Finally, ask them what they expect you to do if they continue with the behavior? Make sure they understand that there will be consequences if things don't change.



Some helpful words:

“Sean, do you know why we’re talking today?.....I’ve been asking you to watch your language in the room and on the bench for the last couple of games. I’d say I’ve given you about 6 warnings so far. What’s going on?.....Do you think this is acceptable?”

“How do think your teammates feel when I ask you nicely to stop swearing and you don’t?....What do you think they think about me as a coach if I keep letting you get away with it?.....OK so you understand this whole thing puts me in a challenging spot?...Good. Are you ready to do something about it? Great. Here’s my plan. I’m going to be watching closely. If you continue to swear and I have to get after you about it, I’m going to sit you for a few shifts. Do you understand? OK. I would like to avoid sitting you. I’m sure you’d like to avoid having to sit. Good enough. I’m glad we’ve spoken and I look forward to putting this behind us. Thanks Sean!”

Depending on the age and the type of personality you’re dealing with, you may even be able to encourage the player to cease the behavior and start to become a leader on your team. Explain that they’ll have to work closely with your as the coach but that they can contribute to the success of the team by working hard, following the plan and being a good team mate.

“Sean, you’re a good hockey player. The kids respect you. You know they’d respect you more if you weren't doing things we’ve asked you not to do, right? I think that if you can set an example, be helpful, follow our plan and have a good attitude, you’d be a good leader on this team. Would you like to help with running drills and helping the coaches with some of our decision making in games? OK, you realize you have to smarten up your behavior and stay on path for this to work, right? Great. I’m looking forward to working with you. Let’s chat for a few minutes before next practice. Maybe we can get you to run your first drill.”

Again, as mentioned previously, if you are unable to make progress with the player, and behavior continues, the best approach is to contact the League Manager or the Mentor Coach to get some assistance.

On Difficult Parents

Sometimes the biggest challenge with parents is when they start trying to coach kids from behind the player bench or in the room. Often a quick, private reminder that the team has coaches and parents should be out of the room and up in the stands, is enough to manage this issue.

If you face more difficult issues with parents, it’s best to contact the league. On balance, NSIHL parents tend to be grateful, helpful and respectful of coaches. On occasion, parents become difficult to deal with for one reason or another and it really is best to contact the league or mentor coach

In Closing

Thank you for reading this handbook and thank you for being a coach or manager! I hope you have a great season!

If you have any feedback on this handbook, please email leaguemanager@nsihl.com.

See you at the rink!!



Requests for modifications to this Coach's Handbook need to be sent to the attention of the League Manager. Changes will be voted upon by the NSIHL Board of Directors after the completion of each season. Modifications to this Coaches Handbook may be made at any time to address items that may have inadvertently been left out.

View Live Stats & Schedules: www.NSIHL.com

Pictures and League Updates: www.facebook.com/NSIHL

Twitter @NSIHL: www.twitter.com/NSIHL

Instagram @NSIHL: www.instagram.com/NSIHL

