



**COACH SELECTION
RESOURCE GUIDE**

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RECRUITING COACHES

Before you start the recruiting process with your association should ask some key questions.

1. Is the time commitment expected reasonable for most people?
2. Is the time of day reasonable for the coaches?
3. Does the association have safety/support mechanisms for the coach?
4. Do you have a philosophy in your association that fosters enthusiasm and a willingness to help?
5. Does the community know about your association programs and the benefits of the programs?
6. Have you as an association clearly outlined the expectations for the coaches?
7. Are you constantly trying to recruit new young coaches to maintain the system? What if the old guard suddenly leaves?
8. What is the past record of the association as far as support to coaches?
9. Have we explained the benefits to potential coaches to ensure that we get the best possible coaches available?

Who to Recruit?

Quite often the obvious answer is parents but are there groups or individuals beyond the parents that would be a potentially strong group of coaches.

Players – this group may have the greatest knowledge of your association. Midget or Juvenile aged players that have recently left the association or players playing college or university hockey locally are quite often very interested in giving back to the program. They typically have tremendous knowledge of the game, enthusiasm and a willingness to learn and grow in the coaching position.

Service Groups – typically these groups are sponsors but may also have an interest in playing an on-ice role.

Oldtimer Teams/Recreational Teams – See if these teams would be interested in adopting a team where several of the players would share the coaching duties.

COACH SELECTION PROCESS

Coach Selection Tree/Timeline

| | Activity | Responsibility | Deadline |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Circulate Applications | | |
| 2 | Appoint Selection Committee | | |
| 3 | Review Applications | | |
| 4 | Short List | | |
| 5 | Conduct Interviews | | |
| 6 | Finalize Selections | | |
| 7 | Notify Applicants | | |
| 8 | Give Initial Instructions | | |

JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR COACHES

Once you have determined your hiring process it is imperative that you as a committee develop a job description for each of the positions that you are hiring for. It is impossible to make coaches accountable, give them feedback or help them develop if they are unsure of what their purpose there really is.

The following 2 pages are generic job descriptions that can be used as guidelines.

Head Coach

Job Description

- Serve as the official spokesperson on behalf of the team
- Coordinate the delegation of responsibilities to the assistant coaches and manager
- Plan on and off-ice activities in consultation with the assistant coaches
- Plan, implement and control pre-game preparation and communication with the team
- Design the practice plans in consultation with the assistant coaches
- Coach the team in all games and practices
- Establish rules for the team and oversee the supervision of the players
- Submit a year end report which contains the following information – evaluation of players' performance, evaluation of team's performance, outline of practice plans and game strategy and recommendations on how the program can be improved.
- Report to the association through the Division Director or designate

Assistant Coach

Job Descriptions

- Assist with planning, organizing and conducting practices
- Assist with pre-game preparation
- Assist with the operation of the team during the games
- Assist with scouting and evaluation of opponents
- Assist with the supervision of players off and on the ice
- Assist with the formulation of the game plan
- Report to the head coach

The following qualifications can be applied to both the Head Coach and the Assistant.

- Strong hockey background in playing, coaching, evaluating
- Strong interest and commitment to child/athlete development
- Ability to work with fellow coaching personnel
- Ability to communicate on and off-ice requirements to players and parents
- Available to meet time requirements
- NCCP and RIS trained/certified at the level indicated by Hockey Alberta

7 STEPS TO COACH SELECTION

1. COMMITTEE SELECTION

It is suggested that the Association form a committee to ensure fairness in the screening interview and final selection of candidates. For simplicity and efficiency, the committee should consist of no more than five people. Committee Members should include a member of the executive, a person with coaching experience, and possibly a neutral person unrelated to the association. Once the committee has been formed, it should meet to establish its structure and procedure. Obviously, any conflict of interest on this committee must be avoided (see disclosure form).

2. APPLICATIONS

All coaches, new or returning, should be required to complete an application form.

Initial Contact: The Association should be available for all prospective coaches to contact. This person will be responsible for the distribution and collection of coaching applications.

The Application Form: A sample application form follows on the next page. Feel free to use it, change it, or create your own. Make sure that applications include all the information you feel you need.

Screening Applicants: When a large number of applicants are received, it may be necessary to screen applicants and establish a short list. On a following page is a selection tree, which is a valuable tool to aid in this process. Guidelines for screening applications should be established in writing, prior to the selection process.

Sample Guidelines: Examples of guidelines to consider (not in order of importance).

- a. Experience in your association
- b. Experience in coaching minor hockey
- c. Experience working with children
- d. Community involvement
- e. Certification, education and training
- f. References

3. THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

- It is preferable that the person (or committee) who will make the final decision, conducts the interview.
- Before interviews take place, the interviewer(s) should be familiar with the qualities the association is looking for in a coach (i.e. Strong competitor, good teacher, motivator, etc.).
- What to ask will depend entirely on the qualities the association is seeking. It is advisable to have a set of written questions, but do not hesitate to ask "spontaneous" questions which may arise during the interview. A list of possible questions appears on the next few pages.
- Interviews may be as casual or as formal as you like. When a committee is involved, it should establish a structure or procedure to ensure the effectiveness of the interview. Some of the things the committee may wish to decide are:

- i. What rank each member has on the committee
 - ii. Who will speak and when (who asks what questions)
 - iii. How the interviewee will be evaluated
- Ideally, you should allow at least half an hour for an interview and leave 15 minutes between interviews. This allows you enough time to discuss the qualities of the candidate and to properly evaluate them.
 - A written record of the interview should be retained by the MHA. This should include the interviewers' evaluation of the candidate. Evaluation may take the form of written comments or involve some sort of numerical ranking and written comments. Again, the categories you use in evaluating should relate to the qualities the association is looking for.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These sample questions have been grouped into five sections. Some questions will not apply to all levels or calibers of minor hockey. Thus, the interview committee must select which questions are relevant and/or important. When interviewing a number of candidates for the same position it is recommended that you first determine a bank of questions that will be asked of all candidates.

I. PHILOSOPHY APPROACH TO COACHING

1. Can you describe for us what you did in this situation... It was halfway through the 2nd period and it was a tight game. You have a line that was not as strong as your other two. You wanted to win.
 - a. What have you done?
 - b. Tell us about a time when the outcome was favourable?
 - c. Tell us about a time when the results were not as favourable?
 - c. What comments did you have to handle and how did you handle them?
 - d. Describe for us what you expect your players to sacrifice in order to win?
2. For your last team what, if any team or individual objectives did you set?
 - a. How did you determine what they would be?
 - b. Were the objectives achieved?
 - c. Would you have changed any if you had to do it all over again?
3. You have outlined (assuming application form was completed) your interests in coaching the coming year with this association. Outline your general philosophy and coaching objectives.
4. As a coach, it is necessary for you to have a standard for the management of your players and support staff before a game, during a game, at a practice, on a road trip? Please explain.
5. What is your attitude with respect to off-ice activities? i.e. Dry land training, school sports, other social activities.
6. What is your philosophy on formation of lines?

7. What is your feeling about players playing more than one position?
8. What are your coaching objectives in order of importance?
9. What is the percentage of time you place on fundamental skills versus hockey strategy?
10. How important is "winning"?

II. TEACHING AND INSTRUCTION

1. What type of practice preparation would you do to ensure that you receive optimum performance from your athletes in readiness for game play?
2. Tell us about a situation when it was important that one of your players learn a new skill. Why was it important?
 - a. What was the skill?
 - b. How did you go about teaching the skill?
 - c. What was the result?
3. How do you define player development?
 - a. Please explain how the athlete learns new skills?
 - b. How do you teach new skill development
4. What is skill analysis?
5. Describe briefly offensive and defensive team play.
6. Why is sound yearly planning essential to the successful operation of a hockey team?
7. How do you teach disciplined play?
8. In tryouts, what skills are you looking for and how do you plan to evaluate them?
 - a. Is it necessary to provide feedback to your athletes on their progress?
 - b. When should this be done?
 - c. Would you prepare any formal evaluations for your players?
9. How do you organize your practices with respect to time for warm-up, cool-down, main teaching time, fun activity and other coaches' responsibilities?
10. Do you agree that to be a good coach you must also be a good educator? Specifically, how is this true?

III. COMMUNICATION WITH PLAYERS

1. How are your team rules communicated to the players?

- a. Tell us about a time when you had to discipline a player and either the player or his teammates felt the discipline was unfair. How did you handle this situation?
 - b. Give us an example of when your discipline was proven to be unjust or inappropriate.
 - i. How did you handle this?
 - ii. What was the result?
2. Tell us about an occasion you are proud of when you were able to instill a sense of motivation into one or more players.
 - a. What was the situation?
 - b. What did you do?
 - c. What was the result?
 3. Do you see yourself as a role model for the athlete? Why?
 4. How do you handle the player who does not get along with teammates?
 5. Explain your approach to individual and team discipline.
(i.e. Older groups out beyond curfew, younger players late for practices consistently).
 6. How do you handle:
 - a. The aggressive player who gets frequent penalties?
 - b. The player who does not pass the puck?
 - c. The superstar versus the weakest player?
 - d. The player who complains about ice time?
 7. What is your approach when dealing with players who have suggestions?
 8. How would you handle a situation where there is jealousy between two players or where two players dislike one another?
 9. How do you handle behavior changes of your players at the specific age group?
 10. What makes players of this age-group different from adults?

IV. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

1. Describe how you would handle a parent who has a different philosophy or game plan than yours.
2. What is your approach when dealing with parents who have criticisms and/or complaints?
3. What is your approach when you hear that a parent is criticizing you “behind your back” and hasn’t approached you on their own to discuss the concern?
4. How would you approach the parent who is excessively vocal and negative in the stands knowing that it is affecting either their own child or the team?

5. How would you handle a complaint from a parent that his/her child does not play enough?
6. How would you handle complaints/accusations from a parent that the team's budget isn't in order and that there may be money missing?
7. What are the most important steps in a dispute resolution?

V. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. If applicable: How do you feel about coaching your child? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
2. What is it about coaching that you find most difficult or you need to work on the most?
3. Tell us about a situation that shows the most positive side of you.
4. Outline one coaching experience you think best characterizes you as a coach.
5. Why do you want this particular team?
6. Would you work as an assistant coach?
7. How would you handle dealing with your affiliate team throughout the season?
8. Should the coaching position not be available, would you consider accepting another position at a different level? What are your preferences?
9. What is your opinion about coaches holding a position on a minor hockey executive?
10. Do you have anyone who would work with you as assistant, manager, trainer?
11. Have you ever been suspended under any hockey regulations as a player or coach? Explain

4. FINAL SELECTION

Once the interviews are completed, it is time to make the final selection. As stated previously, it is strongly recommended that those who conduct the interview be responsible for the final selection of coaches. All candidates should be made aware of when decisions will be made and when all candidates will be contacted.

- There should be pre-set criteria for evaluating candidates. These criteria are based on the desirable qualities outlined by the association. Previous experience, success, and interview evaluation should all be considered.
- Before making a decision, the committee must decide how the final selection will be made. Some questions to ask:
 - i) Who will vote?
 - ii) Will voting be open or by secret ballot?

- iii) Is a majority decision required?
- iv) How do you break a tie?
- Always allow time for discussion before making a decision.

5. CONTACTING CANDIDATES

All applicants, whether successful or not, should be contacted. The person contacting them should have been involved in the selection process ideally the association mentor. This will allow them to be prepared to answer questions unsuccessful candidates will have. Unsuccessful candidates, or coaches who were not given their first choice, should always be given reasons for the decision. It is also suggested that unsuccessful candidates be sent written “thank you” letters for their interest in your association.

Always contact successful applicants first. Only after they have definitely accepted the team should you contact unsuccessful applicants.

6. FOLLOW UP

Initial Instructions: Successful candidates should be told as soon as possible of the expectations of the association and their role in the association. This can be done on an individual basis or at a coaches meeting.

7. EVALUATION

The evaluation of a coach’s performance can be valuable for future selection. Information on the coach’s performance can be gathered from the players’ parents, coaches themselves, other coaches, or by a neutral observer. Evaluations should always be **written**. They may be ongoing or may occur at certain times of the year (i.e. middle and end of season).