

# AAAHA Guidelines for Travel Coaches

## General

- *Abide by the USA Hockey Coaches Code of Conduct.*
- *Abide by USA Hockey Coaching Ethics Code.*

## Coach as a Role Model

- *How much players enjoy the game is heavily dependant on the actions and attitudes of the coach.*
- *It is very important for a head coach and his/her assistants to understand this responsibility and to always act accordingly.*
- *A coach should be more than just a drill instructor. He/she must be:*
  - *a teacher*
  - *a leader*
  - *a mentor*
  - *an administrator*
  - *a disciplinarian.*
- *At all times a coach must maintain a positive attitude and act as a positive role model for his/her players.*
- *The ability to maintain a positive atmosphere, whether winning or losing, is essential to a successful youth coach.*

## Player/Parent Interaction

- *An open line of communication must be maintained with the parents at all times.*
  - *make yourself available to the parents before or after practice and after games for general conversation, etc.*
  - *Grievances should be addressed by phone or appointment and only after a 24hr waiting period.*
  - *Have regular parents meetings*
  - *Be open and honest at all times.*
- *The goals that you have set for the team and the players and the overall objectives and guidelines of the association must be clearly stated.*
- *The coaches' policies with respect to attendance, behavior, attitude, ice-time, and work-ethic, among others, must be made plain to every player and every parent at the beginning of the season.*
- *Team policies must be followed consistently throughout the year.*
- *Be consistent in your treatment of your players.*
- *Every player must know at all times what is expected of him on and off the ice, and must be clear of the consequences, if any, if he/she does not meet those expectations.*

- *If action is taken against a player, such as decreased ice time, the player must know why the action is being taken and what he/she can do to change or correct the situation.*
- *Create and maintain a positive environment for the players at all times.*
- *All criticism should be made in a positive way, if possible.*
- *Yelling at individual players, except for behavior related incidents, should be avoided.*
- *Praise should be given out generously and players should be encouraged to do better rather than discouraged from doing worse.*
- *A coach must understand that all players are different and have different circumstances at home, at school and at the rink.*
- *Players may react differently to specific situations such as winning and losing, success and failure, pressure and stress, and the coach must try to understand these individual differences when communicating with their players.*
- *It is the coaches' role to try and find the things that motivate individual players and find ways to communicate with them on their own level.*

### Player Motivation

- *Motivational techniques should be selected that are based upon the reasons athletes have or joining the team.*
- *You must get to know your athletes as individuals in order to determine why they participate.*
- *Use the positive approach to coaching.*
  - *The most important factor that influences your players' motivation is the approach you take in coaching.*
  - *The negative approach doesn't work very well with young athletes.*
  - *A positive, supportive approach is essential when coaching young athletes if high levels of motivation are to be maintained.*
- *Key principles for implementing a positive approach to coaching:*
  - *Be liberal with rewards and encouragement.*
  - *Give rewards and encouragement sincerely.*
  - *Reward effort and not just results.*
  - *Have realistic expectations*

### Setting Goals

- *Help your players set goals.*
- *Goals should be tailored to the individual.*
  - *Helps players compare past and present performance.*
  - *Makes success possible for everyone on the team.*
- *Goals should be flexible.*
- *Practice goals should be more challenging and competitive goals should be more realistic.*
- *Set individual goals not team goals.*

## Competitive Stress

- *Avoid competitive stress by avoiding the fear of failure.*
- *Don't set unrealistic goals.*
- *Use the positive (sandwich) approach to mistake correction:*
  - *Start with a compliment. Find some aspect of the performance that was correct.*
  - *Then tell the player what was wrong and how to correct it.*
  - *Finish with a positive statement such as, "Keep working at it."*
- *Get your players "psyched up" not "psyched out."*

## Tryouts

- *Plan your tryouts in advance*
- *The tryout format is up to the coach but should include:*
  - *Individual skill drills*
  - *Competitive drills*
  - *Scrimmage*
- *Criteria for evaluation:*
  - *Individual Skills*
  - *Team Skills*
  - *Mental Qualities*
  - *Physical Qualities*
  - *Individual Characteristics*
- *Assign responsibilities for player evaluation*
  - *On-ice assistants (two minimum).*
  - *Impartial observers*
  - *Coaching staff*
- *Releasing players*
  - *Have a plan for dealing with this most difficult aspect of tryouts.*
  - *Avoid public announcements*
  - *Speak with the player individually*
  - *Invite questions from the player*
  - *If possible, direct the player to another team*
  - *Leave on a positive note*