

A note about tryouts...

The way we approach hockey tryouts deserves reflection. With more programs in Washington than ever before, families face overwhelming choices—balancing cost, development, time, friendships, and pressure, along with fear of rejection and mixed messaging.

Programs work hard to stand out, but are they truly considering the parent and player experience? Are they addressing anxiety, educating families, and supporting development beyond the ice?

Start with your “Why.” Whether it’s your child’s passion, personal growth, or love of the game, knowing your purpose helps guide decisions. Then, look beyond logistics. Don’t be afraid to ask programs about character expectations, leadership development, accountability, and how they support players as whole people—not just athletes. If those answers align with your values, you’re in the right place.

Be cautious of programs that pressure same-day commitments or 24-hour deadlines. If your player earns an offer, they’ve earned the opportunity to choose thoughtfully. Ask questions, explore options, and don’t mistake forced compliance for commitment to player and personal development. Finding the right fit matters—and programs should respect that process.

### **Tips for parents:**

- Do your research on leagues, pathways, and rules.
- Don’t overthink roster math—fit matters more.
- Coaches evaluate families as well as players.
- Language matters: players are placed, not “cut.”
- Prepare kids for all outcomes and reframe setbacks as growth.
- Early levels don’t define long-term success—mindset does.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for clear feedback.
- Be honest with programs about your intentions.
- Keep perspective—youth hockey is a long journey.

### **Conversations for players:**

- Focus on your strengths—be yourself.
- Show character through effort, attitude, and teamwork.
- Learn to reset after tough moments. Breathe!
- Stay humble in success—the work continues.
- Keep perspective: it’s a game—compete, enjoy, and grow.

Ultimately, success in tryouts isn’t just about results, but the experience. When families and programs align on values, communication, and development, everyone benefits.

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