



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Justin Smith Appointed Head Coach of Jr. Steelheads 10U A Team**

The Jr. Steelheads are proud to announce the return of Justin Smith, Ph.D., as Head Coach of the 10U A team for the 2025–26 season. Now entering his second year with the organization, Coach Smith brings a rare and powerful combination of scientific expertise, developmental insight, and empathetic leadership to one of the most formative age groups in youth hockey.

A native of Alaska who grew up playing pond hockey under the northern lights, Coach Smith holds a Ph.D. in Neuroscience with a specialization in behavioral performance, stress, and decision-making. He is the founder of Tactical Neuroscience, where he works with athletes and professionals to improve focus, resilience, and performance under pressure.

As a USA Hockey Level 3 certified coach, Coach Smith aligns his program with the American Development Model (ADM), prioritizing high-rep, station-based practices, small-area games, and age-appropriate progression across all skill areas. But what sets him apart is his ability to reach players where they are — helping them develop not just physically, but emotionally, cognitively, and as future leaders.

Key elements of Coach Smith’s 10U A program include:

- **Scientific, Player-Centered Development:** Coach Smith integrates brain-based learning techniques into practices, helping players improve motor learning, reaction time, decision-making, and confidence
- **Structured, High-Volume Reps:** The team will participate in 75–80 practices across the season, with three weekly ice touches, off-ice training opportunities, and six to seven tournaments designed to expose players to competitive but age-appropriate play.
- **Positive, Communicative Culture:** Justin is a thoughtful and patient communicator who emphasizes consistency, clear expectations, and growth mindset coaching. Players are encouraged to self-advocate, learn from failure, and support one another.
- **Parental Partnership and Progress Tracking:** With scheduled touchpoints, regular updates, and individual development meetings built into the season, families can expect transparency, education, and a shared vision for long-term growth.

Coach Smith’s philosophy is simple: teach the game the right way, develop the whole athlete, and foster a love for hockey that lasts far beyond 10U. With a background few can match and a heart for coaching, he’s an incredible asset to the Jr. Steelheads and a game-changer for every player in his care.

Welcome back, Coach Smith.

Go Steelheads!

