

What It Means to Be “Coachable”

It's your first day at practice. There's excitement about meeting new teammates and coaches. Young players want to make a good impression, and the natural thought is to score a flashy goal or make a big save to get everyone's attention.

Sure, coaches and teammates want to see standout talents on their teams. However, there's no quality more important for a coach to see than a player who wants to learn. Being a coachable hockey player is the fastest route to becoming a better hockey player.

Be Prepared

Providence College women's hockey head coach Bob Deraney knows a coachable player when he sees one. According to him, players who want to be on the ice, learn from mistakes and approach every practice and game as a chance to improve are the players most likely to succeed. There's no formula for success that universally applies to every player. Each is different with varying strengths and weaknesses, and being coachable helps players identify those shortcomings and improve them.

One of the biggest hallmarks of a coachable player is someone who clearly invests time before the game or practice getting ready.

"(A coachable player is) someone who shows up prepared, practice or game," Deraney said. "They are ready to get better and be the best they can be. They're smiling and energetic, and they look in the eye when they speak with them. They're the kind that wants to be the first one there and last to leave, and always wants to do one more. Their No. 1 priority is being a good teammate, encouraging and challenging their teammates to be the best they can be."

Winning Attitude and Resilience

One important aspect of youth hockey is the relationship between players and coaches and how that helps young players get better. It's not all about winning games at the youth levels, but having a winning attitude is paramount in development.

Having a winning attitude and mindset enhances development, fuels passion for the game and makes your teammates better. That all starts in practice, and coaches love to see players with that demeanor.

"When you make a mistake and you're upset with yourself, don't let people know by banging your stick or shaking your head," Deraney said. "The best thing to do is own it and come back harder on the next play or shift."

Be a Good Teammate

The same is true when teammates make mistakes or struggle to pick up a new concept. Coachable players understand that not everyone is going to get it right the first time – and the support from teammates means a lot. When teammates work hard for each other, they have more success. Coaches need to see players that understand the learning process, commit to getting better in all areas of the game and strive to become a cohesive team.

The attitude that separates good hockey players from great hockey players all ties back to the idea of being coachable and striving to improve every day.

"The difference between a good player and a great player is that a good player thinks he or she is good and a great player always believes they can be better," Deraney said. "A great player is an athlete who is never satisfied."

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