



Coaches Message for April

Louis St. Laurent High School BARONS Hockey Academy

I remember as a former player for the University of Alberta Golden Bears hockey team competing against York University in the National Championship Final. We lost the game 3-2 after firing more than 50 shots at their goaltender Mark Applewaite and we totally dominating them for 3 periods. At the time we were the number one ranked team in Canada for the entire year and it was extremely difficult to comprehend how York could have possibly beaten us on the score board. We played better than they did during the game and throughout the year the Golden Bears had achieved greater success. A 'betting man' should have been safe if he had put his money on our team.

After the loss, Clare Drake, overcome with emotion, came into the dressing room and stated to us that he had never been more proud of any Golden Bear team than after that loss. I didn't know at the time but what Coach was saying to us was that we were actually winners because of the effort we gave throughout that game. Because of not only 'what Coach said but how he said it,' I went from an emotional state of sadness by not winning the national championship to feeling better about my own self worth and effort because of the way he made me feel.

Obviously that is common sense however what a coach or parent says after a game or school event can make an amazing and long lasting impact on the mental well-being of the kids that play. By keeping that in mind we'll always remember that we all have the power to make a positive difference in our boys lives.

The next time you talk to your son after a game or an event, try to avoid asking them competitive based questions or talk poorly about his teammates, such as:

- **Did You Win?**
- **Did you score?**
- **How many assists did you get?**
- **How come you weren't working very hard out there?**

As parents, we may be just trying to show interest in our kids but what we ultimately say and how we say it may cause an adverse effect that can trigger negative feelings associated to esteem, cause a perception of worthlessness based on the outcome, and create dissention towards teammates and possibly initiate confusion in his mind about the primary purpose of why he is playing the game.

Instead, by asking “open ended questions” that help our sons evaluate their performance will have more benefit in the long run. Questions such as:

- **How did it go / what are your thoughts?**
- **What went well?**
- **What do you think can be improved upon?**
- **What were the highlights in your view?**
- **Did you have FUN?**

*Kids today are smarter than we sometimes give them credit for and by asking them for their own “self-analysis” and **than ensuring that we remain silent to allow them to respond**, I believe that you will be amazed at how perceptive they are. I learned this through experience raising my own sons. Your feedback as a parent is extremely important to your son, however, as parents our primary focus for them should be on encouraging them to have FUN, LEARNING new skills and always GIVING their VERY BEST EFFORT – not on winning as an outcome and how many points they get.*

Remember that it is always a GOOD THING when our kids TALK and they can only do that if we parents force ourselves to listen.

The statement "wow does time ever fly by" certainly holds true as we move into May. Our theme next month will be on "attack options," "support," and "cycling" as we continue our technical skill development focus on skating, puckhandling, passing, shooting and checking. The skill improvement of every student has been tremendous over the last three months and the coaches continue to approach every day with a high level of enthusiasm as we get to know one another more and more. This has allowed us to get a glimpse of their personalities and character which has created at times admiration, laughs and applause. On behalf of Jaret, Larry, Jamie, Barry and Dave thanks to all the students and parents for a great April.

Rick

Life Lessons learned over the first three months of our hockey academy (every student has read 'every word') and a lot more to come:

- "Carpenter's Story"
- "Don't Quit"
- "Eyes of a Warrior"
- "Game Face"
- "Impossible is Nothing"
- "Knock the 't' Off Can't"
- "Making of a Champion"
- "Man in the Mirror"
- "Story of Michael"

- *"Nail in the Fence"*
- *"No Such Thing as a Shift Off"*
- *"All in a State of Mind"*
- *"The Mountain Story"*
- *"The Science of Scoring Goals"*
- *The Chemistry of Insight*
- *The Chemistry of Family*
- *The Chemistry of Tolerance*
- *The Chemistry of Sacrifice*
- *"A Means to an End"*
- *"What Makes a Champion"*
- *"The Wolf Story"*
- *"The Common Denominator of Success"*
- *"Influences for a Good Attitude"*
- *"Applying Yourself Everyday"*
- *"There Is No Excuse for Not Working To Give Your Very Best"*