



### COACHES MARCH MESSAGE

After a long hockey season coaching, spring break allows me to spend some quality time with my family to 'give back' and show them just how much I appreciate their support. I am extremely appreciative and fortunate that I can do this.

Appreciation is defined as the expression of gratitude or admiration. In hockey it is the appreciation of *Respect, Fun, Attitude and Values* that remain the foundational building blocks that promote the positive benefits for our sons from their participation in the game of hockey. For hockey parents I believe it is essential that we all reflect on what 'spending time with family' really means and to reflect that attitude to the people we are fortunate enough to have an impact on each and every single day. By appreciating what we have in our own lives will equally impact our role as supportive hockey parents with a passion and energy that is indescribable.

Appreciation is also how we choose to feel about a situation or challenge in our life, and it is a large part of having a positive mental attitude. We can all show appreciation by doing something for someone else and not expecting anything else in return. In a sense we want to show appreciation because it feels right and most importantly we know it is the right thing to do.

By appreciating what we have, we are not only free to enjoy the moment, but it allows us to plan for and impact the future of others in a very positive way. If appreciation increases the more we share it with others then we should make it a habit to tell our sons and the people around us just how thankful we are to have them in our life and how much we appreciate what they have done. When we get in to the habit of "filling emotional fuel tanks", we'll almost always observe a great change in the attitude of others that will be worthy of praise and recognition. In order to make positive changes in the game of hockey in today's world as well as life in general, attitude is always the first step.

There would be fewer problems in our game if coaches and parents showed more appreciation, encouragement, positive direction and unconditional support to our kids playing. It is a good starting point for sure.

Once again on behalf of Jaret, Larry, Jamie, Dave, and Barry I would like to thank the players and the parents for their support, their appreciation and their encouragement to the Louis St. Laurent Hockey Academy as we move into April 2010.

Rick Swan  
LSL Hockey Academy HEAD COACH

**SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT**

***"Other people go to the office. I get to coach. I know I've been blessed."***

***-- Jim Valvano***

Many people not linked to hockey or to sports for that matter, believe that most philosophies are linked to an ancient era, associated to the likes of an Aristotle, with little value to modern life in the 20th century. As hockey parents with teenage sons, we all know that nothing could be farther from the truth because it is the fundamental beliefs and values of any individual that can have a profound effect on every decision that teenagers make.

Another way of looking at it from a 'hockey perspective' that in order to develop the desired values obtained from participating in the game the focus should be about having a great time (developing a passion to play), making friends that last a lifetime (value friendships and accepting differences), learning life skills (building character) and satisfying the "competitive / fire" that lies within us all by trying to be the best that we can be. I know that many will disagree however winning or losing should never be the main objective. If we really want to have a profound effect on the young people playing the game we will direct their mindset towards giving their very best in an attempt to obtain a successful result within the context of fair play and in a team setting full of friends - that should be the main goal.

The 'dressing room fun,' the hard working practices, bonding as friends, learning new skills, enhancing positive self esteem and receiving affirmation from parents, teammates and coaches are all part of the amateur hockey experience.

If your kids are lucky enough to stick with hockey or any type of sport throughout their life they will continue to meet great people wherever they go. I know I have. The faces may change but the fun and self-enrichment you develop will remain for a lifetime.

I have been playing and coaching hockey for over 40 years and have run into a wide range of personalities in teammates, coaches, players, fans, referees, and parents who have made my life more fulfilling than one could ever imagine. As with all philosophies, things need to be constantly re-thought, challenged, and expanded on however the one thing that should never change is the true meaning of what sports is all about. *Respect - Having Fun - Developing Friendships (players and parents) - The Physical and Emotional Well-being of everyone involved - and Positive Growth.*

It is important to always remember the good people you meet in this game and forget the others that taint the true spirit of youth sports.

Have a great spring break.

Rick