



Tips to Help Coaches Communicate Effectively

Coach To Coach:

- Defined roles for each staff member, for each situation and write them down
 - *At Practice:*
 - Who designs practice, Who leads each drill, speaks at the board, on-ice demonstrations, corrections, etc
 - *In Games:*
 - Who speaks during pre-game, intermission and post-game talks and what they address
 - On the bench: who has forwards, defense, special situations, timeouts, goalies

Coach To Player:

Seven Aspects of Effective Feedback

- Keep it simple
- Specific NOT General
- Constructive NOT Destructive
- Sooner NOT Later
- Check for clarity NOT left misunderstood
- Positive and Informative NOT Negative

****Coaching Tip # 1***

Before giving feedback or corrections to your players give them time to recover. If a player's coming back to the bench after a hard shift and is breathing hard, they're probably not ready to receive any feedback, so give them a little time.

****Coaching Tip # 2***

When you're addressing your team at practice, always position the team with their backs to the spectators or to a location where the players are not distracted by events occurring off the ice.



***Coaching Tip # 3**

Key Non-Verbal Skills for Coaches

- Make eye contact
- Greet players with a smile
- Be visible to all players
- Be aware of your body language

The “Be” list provides 5 simple guidelines to help you define the type of coach you would like to be:

Be a Teacher

- Take the time to fully express your goals and objectives
- Remember who you are talking to and be sure to address them using language they can easily understand, and at an even eye level when possible
- Clearly state what you expect from the players, coaches and parents
- Be patient. Your job as a coach is to develop and instill a love of the game
- Challenge and develop players — not just skills, but also passion and enthusiasm
- Set goals for both players and coaches. Acknowledge when those goals have been reached

Be Enthusiastic

- Love what you are doing. Your passion for what you do will be contagious
- Make sure your mind and spirit are with you while you coach
- Be supportive of all players. Children need positive reinforcement and we all need to feel successful. Measure each child’s success on how much they have accomplished as an individual
- Praise effort not only results. Remember, hockey is a game and it’s supposed to be fun. It’s not just about scoring goals

Be positive

- Consider mistakes an opportunity to teach and a chance for team growth
- Find three positive situations for every period of play and share them with your team
- Make games and challenges out of difficult skills or obstacles



Be prepared

- Have a code of conduct for both the players and the coaches
- Create a formal contract with the team committing everyone to creating a better team
- Come ready to coach. If you come unprepared, your players will notice
- Explain each person's roles and responsibilities

Be consistent

- Allow players to help you set the rules and code of conduct. If the team is involved in setting the rules, they are more likely to stick to them
- Set boundaries and expectations for players and coaches. Let them know the consequences of breaking the rules, and enforce them equitably
- Treat all children as individuals
- If coaching your own child, treat them the same as you treat the other players
- If you have to reprimand a player or coach, make sure you have all the information. Don't jump to conclusions
- Be fair and even-handed

Coach To Officials:

- **Use the Jeopardy! approach to talking with referees: express every concern in the form of a question.** It rarely goes well if a coach tries to "tell" an official what a bad job they are doing. Don't say, "That call was wrong." Try "Could you tell me what you saw in that hit?" Or the close cousin, "What did my player do to earn that penalty?" And, if you can, sound like you really want to hear the answer.
- **Start with an assumption that you don't know the rules.** Because you don't. Very few coaches have a really good grasp of rules. For all the other coaches, if you are coaching and want to learn more, Hockey Canada has [great resources online](#), including videos and a rule book app. Or ask your local referee-in-chief to explain particularly confusing rules.
- **Get down off the bench, go down to the end away from the players, and — particularly if the referee is a lot younger than you — do not yell.** For any conversation between an official and a coach to be productive, it has to be respectful. Standing on the bench and yelling down at a ref, particularly younger refs, is just not ok. Remember, there is no bad or missed call that is bad enough to warrant a tantrum.

Most coaches will, after being reminded of the need for civil discourse during the game, behave properly. For those who simply cannot be civil, there's always the walk of shame.



Do's and Don'ts for Coaches when dealing with officials

Do: Introduce Yourself and Your Team

Youth hockey referees are doing a service for your team and for the league, so it may be nice to introduce yourself and show some professional courtesy. They will be relieved to see that they are working with a calm, [personable coach](#) rather than someone who views them as the enemy. They take a lot of undeserved heat, so making them feel welcome to the league can help strengthen your relationship with them. This isn't to "grease the wheels," but merely to show appreciation for their work.

Don't: Try to Gain Unfair Advantages

Some youth leagues take place in tightly knit communities where many people know each other. Even if the ref is your best friend, you shouldn't try to gain an advantage over the other team. This is dishonest and will only hurt your team in the long run if they benefit from sloppy play. The refs are there to do a job and you should let them do it as objectively as possible.

Do: Respectfully Tell Your Opinions

If you feel that a ref made a bad call, it's okay to let him know why you feel this way. Perhaps refer to a rulebook or point out that he might have missed something on the other end of the ice. As mentioned before, refs are human and will make mistakes. Being respectful in your objections to their calls will make them in turn respectful of you and more likely to listen to your point of view.

Don't: Insult or Berate the Refs for Missed Calls

The refs are people too, and it doesn't help anybody on the ice if you start hurling insults at them because you feel your team got the short end of the stick. It could give the refs a poor opinion of your ability as a coach and might have parents wondering the same thing. You don't want to create any grudges or embarrass your team, so bite your tongue even if you feel it's the worst call that you've ever seen. It could also result in you getting a penalty!