

SMS Youth Hockey Association

Guidelines for SMS Coaches:

SMS serves all levels of interest – ranging from competitive, "select" level coaching and play, to an "open to anyone who wants to play hockey" development focused experience. Tryouts and player evaluations are used to place players based on their level of skill, commitment, work ethic, team play, and positive attitude. Teams range from the most competitive to the least competitive within an age group.

SMS commits the same level of commitment, enthusiasm, and investment of resources to all teams. SMS recognizes that kids have the same desire to win, to develop their individual and team skills, personal values, and to have fun, regardless of the level of competition. SMS also recognizes that individual player needs and coaching requirements are different for each team. SMS encourages coaches to assess each player's individual needs to determine the best approach towards coaching the team.

SMS provides the following advice to coaches to establish the range of accepted behaviors regardless of the level of competition.

1. Coaches will conduct themselves consistent with these guidelines, the bylaws of SMS, the rules and regulations of the leagues and tournaments where we play, of MASS Hockey, and of USA Hockey. The SMS Coach Coordinator will make all of this information readily available.
2. Coaches will strive to develop the skills and game knowledge expected of their age group. Skills progression information will be provided by the SMS Coach Coordinator and ADM Coordinator. SMS follows the American Development Model (ADM). ADM is a nationwide model for successfully developing American hockey players. The goal is to ensure every kid will have the same chance to succeed. By implementing ADM, associations see significant increases in player retention, hockey skill development, and fun for players. Again, ADM is a set of guidelines designed specifically to help kids reach their full potential. SMS schedules ADM type practices where it is expected that there will be 4-6 station drills operating simultaneously and up to 3 teams on the ice where possible. More touches, more turns, more quick decisions mean more opportunity for player development and enhancement. Resources will be provided to coaches. Information and age appropriate practice plans are always available for your review and use at <http://admkids.com>.
3. Teamwork is essential. Consistent player attendance at practices and games is the best way for players to improve their skills and hockey sense. Parents and players will do their best to juggle other obligations and manage their time around team commitments. Players and parents will be informed that poor attendance may impact playing time, but obviously there will be occasions where there are valid reasons for missing an event, and this will be accommodated. Coaches can expect to be notified in advance of all absences.
4. All players are encouraged to pursue additional opportunities outside of SMS to develop skills and conditioning, both through additional hockey activities and other sports. SMS also encourages players to be involved in other activities in school, their community, and other areas of interest. Research from USA Hockey and top sports psychologists confirms that this will make stronger athletes, more well-rounded kids, healthier competitors and better hockey players.
5. It is inevitable that points 3 and 4 will lead to conflicts. Examples include the player missing a hockey practice to play in a football, soccer, or baseball game. Coaches need to accept that SMS encourages kids pursue activities outside of hockey. At the same time, players must acknowledge that absence from practices and games hurt both individual and team performance and accept that it may affect their playing time if conflicts cannot be managed effectively.
6. Coaches conduct high intensity, purposeful practices. Conditioning is improved and maintained. "Stand around" time is minimized for players. Practices are kept fun and fresh for kids. A balance is maintained between drills that reinforce skills through repetition, and repetitive drills that bore kids and discourage them from attending practice.
7. Peeewe level and above, coaches may reward players that demonstrate a high level of commitment to their teammates and to practices with increased playing time during specialty team situations. The coach must explain this during the team meeting at the beginning of the season. Coaches will be consistent through the

year. As players develop and demonstrate increased commitment towards practice, they should be rewarded with increased opportunities to play in specialty team situations. Players who do not demonstrate a high level of commitment should not be rewarded with increased playing time regardless of how skilled they may be.

8. Any coach can decide to sit a player down for poor attitude, disrupting the team, a lack of commitment, or for sufficiently poor attendance that it impacts the effectiveness of his/her teammates. This step should not be taken unless the coach has first discussed the player's shortcomings with the player and his parents. This can be done without notice if the player has committed an egregious act during a game or practice.
9. If there are problems with players or parents that a coach is not able to resolve to his/her satisfaction, the coach will communicate the issue to the Coach Coordinator. The SMS Board of Directors will resolve the issue in collaboration with the Coach. Remedies can include suspension from participation in practices and games.
10. The desire to win does not lessen the importance of the coach serving as a good role model to 100% of the players, 100% of the time. This includes the following: taking a positive approach to player mistakes, demonstrating respect for ref's regardless of a call, respect for the competition, and respect for each player in front of fans, teammates, and opposing players. Coaches will teach kids to be a class act, win or lose. Coaches will promote a strong work ethic to help SMS players develop a high level of determination and competitiveness.
11. Coaches of teams with players of widely varying skills need to be adept at organizing practices to find a way to focus on kids with specific needs (e.g. basic skating skills) without holding back those kids that are developing more quickly. This way all kids can move forward vs. falling victim to the lowest common denominator.
12. Head coaches are expected to have command of basic hockey skills – more the better, combined a proven ability to motivate players and to teach all aspects of the game. Coaches on more competitive teams have demonstrated past success coaching at a competitive level measured not by wins/losses, but in terms of player and team development and accelerating accomplishment throughout the season.
13. Coaches are expected to have a mandatory team meeting with players and parents at the beginning of the season. Coaches may use email communication to set expectations. It is important that coaches meet parents face to face. This meeting should clearly set expectations of all involved and is the basis for addressing individual issues with players or parents throughout the year.
14. At least one coach should be in the locker room at all times.