

PHA'S PHILOSOPHY ON PLAYING TIME

Putnam Hockey Association (PHA) has adopted a policy of fair playing time for all team players. During the season, *prior to league playoffs and except for tournament games*, our priority is to develop and play all players. Every player, goaltenders included, deserves a regular shift. We believe that, by the end of the season, we will have a better team if we have three experienced/developed lines (and sets of defensemen), rather than two. We believe we will ultimately be a stronger program and win more games if we are fair in this regard. We will certainly be doing the right thing for the most kids with this policy, and we believe that is what kids' sports are all about.

What is "fair"? Every player sees a regular shift. *Fair does not necessarily mean equal.* Special team play is **earned** (man up/down at end of third period). The coach's job is to balance fair play with the fact that playing time is a significant coach's tool in managing players. "Pay attention, play hard, practice hard, help the team = **play more**. Mess around, be disruptive, miss numerous practices, do not listen, hurt the team = **play less**." Missing a shift makes a huge impact on a player. Being promoted to the power play makes a huge impact on a player and so on. The coach will take into consideration game situations, player performance that day, behavioral and disciplinary concerns, and numerous other factors. If a player is sick, he may not play as much. If a player does not follow the game plan repeatedly, he may miss a shift. If a player picks it up a notch, he may be promoted. **NEVER FORGET though, we are really committed to attempting to motivate through nurturing and positive reinforcement. Adjustment of playing time is a critical part of coaching but, in GENERAL, every player plays a fair amount of time.**

However, come playoff time, our priority will be to win. That means that a coach might 'shorten the bench' if he/she feels that it is in the best interest of the team's goals. Players will have the opportunity all year to prove themselves and, at this year-end tournament, coaches will tend to favor the players who 'are ready to step it up.' Our goal is that by this time in the season, all teams will have 3 full units ready to step it up.