



What it Takes to be a USA Hockey Coach

What does it take to be a coach? It can't be that difficult? Play some fun games and work on some skills, that's easy enough. Well, that couldn't be further from the truth because coaching is no easy task!

The role of the coach is a vital one. The coach is an instrumental part of a player's development and attitude towards the sport. The primary goal of a coach should be to guide and improve players' hockey skills as well as their personal development on and off the ice. Players will mirror the coach's behavior, whether it is positive or negative. Therefore, coaches must lead by example, maintain their composure, act professionally at all times and learn the game and the skills required for ice hockey. A coach must be a leader, a communicator, a teacher and an organizer.

To ensure that coaches in ice hockey are adequately trained and prepared, USA Hockey has developed a comprehensive Coaching Education Program. The first step a coach must take is to attend an annual coaching clinic. These coaching clinics are typically held in the fall and range from Level 1 to Level 5. Each coaching level builds upon what was learned at the last level and coaches must progress through the levels up to level 3. Once at level 3, a coach may recertify twice at that level by taking an online recertification class every other year, then must attend a Level 4 coaching clinic. At that point they are no longer required to attend a coaching clinic, but may choose to attend the Level 5 National Hockey Coaches Symposium, which is generally held every other year.

In addition to attending a coaching clinic, all coaches must take the age-specific online education module associated with the level(s) of players they are coaching. These modules are approximately six-to-seven hours long and cover material that is specific to the age of the player being coached. Electronic manuals and documents are included in the modules to provide further education and resources on the topics being taught.

USA Hockey also provides coaches with a wealth of resources online at usahockey.com and through their coaching app. These resources include coaching manuals, practice plans, skills and drills videos, along with coaching hand-outs all designed to further enhance a coaches knowledge and ability to help the players grow both on and off the ice.

All of this education and resources are provide by USA Hockey to make sure players have a positive and enjoyable experience. You must have a real passion for the game and for working with children to be a coach in a USA Hockey program. Close to 60,000 coaches go through this process across the country just to ensure that players reach their full potential.

