

## Are You A Good Hockey Parent?

*We realize that watching little loved ones scurry around the rink can occasionally be frustrating. But there should be limits on the manifestations of that frustration. If you take a look at the following questions and notice a bit of yourself in there, or if you answer yes to all of them, we ask that you kindly remove your name from running for hockey parent of the year.*

- When your kids clean their plates, do you make Zamboni references?
- Do you have a spreadsheet on your fridge with your child's statistics?
- Do you cheer during warmups?
- Do you keep your son or daughter's stats during practice?
- Unless your child needs a ride, do you go to practice?
- Have you ever found yourself at center ice, without skates on, in street clothes, during a game, as the only non-official adult on the ice, uninvited, cursing at an official?
- Is your mugshot on a bulletin board at your local rink above the words, "barred from entry"?
- Have you tried to return your son or daughter's stick to the pro shop because it had "no goals in it"?
- Have you tried to return your son or daughter's skates to the pro shop because "everyone seems faster"?
- Did you contact NCAA scouts before your kid's 10th birthday?
- Do you demand of your kid that a goal and an assist be scored before you'll let him or her eat?
- Do you demand of your kid that a goal and an assist be scored before you'll let anyone in the family eat?
- Do you call your son or daughter by a different name -- like, say, Stone Hands -- depending on how well he or she plays?
- Do you not call your son or daughter at all depending on how well he or she plays?
- Do you believe your kid shouldn't pass the puck ... ever?
- Do the candles on his cake correspond to the birth date or the years remaining "as an amateur"?
- Have you yelled at your kid for not picking up on your telepathic message to shoot low to the stick side?
- Have you ever made your kid run home, with his gear on his or her back, beside the car, for missing an open net?
- Do you refer to school days as "off days"?
- Do you refer to game days as "what it's all about"?

- Do you forget the last compliment you've given to your kid's teammates?
- Do you forget the last compliment you've given to your own kid?

Well all know that hockey is an extremely competitive sport, but that competitiveness occasionally leaves the rink and heads up the stands and will roost itself into, you guessed it, a parent!

As parents, we have a responsibility to teach our children good sportsmanship and courtesy. While we do our best to teach our children right from wrong, there are times that, while watching our children play the intense game of hockey, we let "our evil twin" get the better of us.

The more competitive we as parents become, the likelihood of our children developing the same tactics on and off the ice becomes greater. At a moment when we want to criticize a coach, referee, or another player we need to pause a moment and ask ourselves how we would react if our child did the exact same thing. The answer would probably mean grounding, taking away his Xbox 360 or some form of punishment! Well, you are grounded! Go to your room!

Wait come back we are not finished! The actions we as parents take greatly affect negatively on the actions and feelings of our child. So consider some guidelines that may provide an excellent hockey experience for everyone involved.

Firstly, remember you are in the stands as a spectator, NOT on the ice. Let the coaches do their jobs. Whether they are paid or unpaid coaches; they have a job to do. It is up to them to guide their team, any advice you give on plays could confuse your child.

Allow your child to play the game. Yelling at them from the stands, to do this or that, will be a major distraction. Allow your child to learn from mistakes made on the ice.

As hard as it may be, do not complain about the teams coach to other parents. If you have issues with the coach talk with him in private about the issues.

Do not make negative comments about another player. This only brings out the worst in everyone. Not only is it hurtful to the player and their parents (after all this youth sport is supposed to be about fun and learning the game of hockey), it will only make you look like an egotistical jerk.

If you overhear someone speaking negatively about a player or coach, respond positively with specific qualities the person possesses that strengthens the team.

**ENCOURAGE! ENCOURAGE! ENCOURAGE!** The team and players. Positive encouragement leads to extra hustle and effort on the ice. If there is a mistake, you should not ever comment on it, that is what the coach is for after all.

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