

How we assign coaches to teams

One of the hot topics from year to year is inevitably how we go about placing coaches on which teams. Yes, there are those that say certain teams get the "good" coaches. First of all, let me say this....what constitutes a "Good" coach in your eyes? Is it accountability? Is it a high knowledge of the game? Is it the ability to put smiles on kids' faces? Perhaps a quick anecdote to illustrate my point....three years ago I, honest to god, received two phone calls at home regarding coaches on two different teams in MAHA. the first parent was frustrated because, even though their coach knew the x's and o's of the game really well, he didn't relate to kids very well and the kids weren't having as much fun as they should as a result. The second phone call was a parent frustrated with the fact that, even though the kids LOVED their coach, he didn't know his x's and o's very well. Two parents with exact opposite viewpoints on what a "good" coach was, calling the same night. Granted, we would all like to have ALL of the qualities of a "good" coach in our coach, but the reality is that we are a volunteer association that pays our coaches just about enough to pay their expenses for a season.

So back to the question. With that said, when looking to place coaches on teams you have to first look for someone that is willing to put in the time it takes to coach youth hockey. Not always easy.....Bantams put in more hours than Squirts...and some don't like that. Secondly, and since they are indeed volunteers for the most part, you need to put them in a situation they feel the best about so that they are able to put their best foot forward and enjoy what they are doing. Some don't want the late hours of bantams...some don't want the fundamentals of Squirts....others may choose to coach girls over boys. Once you have figured out the level they would best fit with then you have to factor in experience, their ability to bring along their own coaching staff, and what types of personalities they are best suited for. Some coaches are not suited for the high expectations which usually surround an "A" team....some coaches don't have the patience to work with kids who need more skill development...etc. Like it or not this is a fact when trying to gather volunteer coaches.

And lastly....there is a lot of questioning about why certain staffs have more experienced coaches from top to bottom where other staffs have three first year coaches. More often than not the answer is quite simple....they prefer to coach together. In a world where we are asking people to give their nights and weekends for five straight months for a group of kids they are not related to, you have to allow coaches to put themselves in situations where they will enjoy themselves....and that does not always mean splitting up and taking their own teams. Another important fact to remember is that some of our coaches cannot commit to the time it takes to be a full time coach, so they latch on as an assistant with someone they are able to work out a schedule with. This does not necessarily mean the "good" coaches are always on the "A" teams....but it is far more likely for a coach with ten years of experience to prefer the higher intensity situation of an "A" team. And at the same time....ask yourself....is a demanding and high strung coach the best fit for a B2 or C team?