



The Role of the House League Head Coach

Overview

When your players think back to their minor hockey days, the wins and losses will have long been forgotten, but the life lessons and opportunity you created in their lives will have a lasting impact. Your ability to demonstrate the fun and friendship they can have with hockey should be a big reason you want to be a head coach with the HMHA.

This page is intended to give you an overview of how to become a coach and what is involved once you do volunteer.

Volunteering to Coach

Individuals interested in coaching at HMHA should submit their names prior to the start of the season. If interested in coaching a house league team, please complete the application form and submit it to the House League Director.

Head Coach Job Description

- Serve as the official spokesperson on behalf of the team
- Coordinate the delegation of responsibilities to the assistant coaches and manager
- Plan on and off-ice activities in consultation with the assistant coaches
- Plan, implement and control pre-game preparation and communication with the team
- Design the practice plans in consultation with the assistant coaches and partner team coach
- Coach the team in all games and practices
- Establish rules for the team and oversee the supervision of the play
- Report to the association through the House League Director

Assistant Coach Job Description

- Assist with planning, organizing and conducting practices
- Assist with the operation of the team during the games
- Assist with pre-game preparation
- Assist with the supervision of players off and on the ice
- Assist with the formulation of the game plan
- Report to the head coach

Certification Requirements

House League Team Coaches (Novice to Midget):

- Head coaches in Novice and Atom Houseleague must have the minimum CHIP certification with Speak Out. For Pee wee and Up Coach Stream Certification and Speak Out
- Assistant coaches require Speak Out and it is highly recommended coaching certification for their age group
- All volunteers on the roster (head coach, assistant coaches, goalie coach, on-ice helpers, trainers, manager) must have spoken out.

House League On-ice Coaches (Initiation Program):

- All on-ice coaches, including the head coach, require the Intro Coach course and Speak Out.

Volunteers have up until November to obtain proper certification. Coach certification costs are reimbursed by HMHA.

Time Commitment

The HMHA House League season runs from early September to as late as mid-March. All house league teams receive two allocations (games/practices) per week with the exceptions provided on the organization website.

Coach Selection

The House League Director will select head coaches for each level from the pool of applicants available and the based on a number of criteria, which may include feedback results from previous year coach surveys and impressions from written and/or verbal communications and interviews with the House League Director and/or designates.

Your New Team

Players and their families must be contacted by the coach, though a welcome letter, which may include an introduction of yourself and a chance to state some objectives or philosophies along with initial team ice times or team meetings.

Volunteers

The coach is also required to form a team of parent volunteers to help during the season. The coach will need to select the team officials and possibly solicit more volunteers.

As many parents as possible should be involved to staff team officials positions. Team officials share in the various team responsibilities that must be managed throughout the year. Volunteers are required for the following roles:

- assistant coaches (2-3);
- a manager(s);
- trainer(s);

The coach should also select one assistant coach to serve as the backup for when the head coach is not able to attend a game or practice. These volunteers are selected by the head coach, though the Director or designate may have recommendations.

The Head Coach should ensure that all volunteers take the necessary courses for their role. While the Head Coach is required to complete the Coach Stream course, assistant coaches are not but it is highly recommended. Trainers are required to have valid Trainer1 certification. All team staff are required to have taken the Speak Out course once.

For younger teams, having juice after the game or practice is very important. The manager should set up a juice rotation schedule.

The head coach should check all player equipment early in the season and at regular intervals to ensure the safety and effectiveness of the equipment.

Ice Time

- The Director will provide times for games and practices as soon as provided by the Ice Scheduler. Relay the ice time to families as quickly as possible. HMHA uses the organizational calendar to notify families and it is recommended that a volunteer be selected to be the Team Pages administrator for the team.

Practices

- Almost all HMHA assigned practice times are shared ice with another team in the same division.
- Coaches must commit the time to practice preparation which includes a practice plan that considers the needs of the team and HMHA and Hockey Canada guidelines for the age group taking to the ice. The practices should be interesting and challenging. The practice plans should be communicated to the partner coach and all on-ice help in advance (not when you arrive at the rink) to ensure the best use of the limited time the players are on the ice.
- At least one qualified trainer from either team must be at every practice.

Games

- The home team is responsible for providing the game sheet
- At least one qualified trainer from either team must be at every game
- HMHA has an equal ice time policy for all house league teams. This means that no player should intentionally get more or less ice time than another, or be put on or kept off the ice in certain situations such as a power play or a key moment late in the game. HMHA believes that all players deserve an equal opportunity to contribute at all times of the game and for equal lengths of time, and that while “shortening the bench” may help a team have a better chance to win, the harm to a child’s confidence lasts much longer than the temporary satisfaction of winning the game. No matter what the situation may be, the coach is instructed to roll the next line or next player, no exceptions. No matter how badly you may want to win and think that sending certain players on the ice will help, or what pressure you may get from other parents, DON’T DO IT. Keep the ice time and the opportunity fair and send the next player due to go on the ice.
- Players starting the game should be rotated. Players should also be given opportunities to try different positions.
- A coach caught not following this policy will be called to a hearing and may be suspended.

End of Season

- Jerseys need to be collected at the completion of your final game. (Ask your manager to look after the collecting and checking for damage).
- The HMHA provides year end awards for each player.
- Most teams finish the year with a team party. This could be a pot-luck at someone's home, or going to a local business for some fun (bowling, laser tag) and/or food. This gives the team a chance to gather and acknowledge the volunteers who have helped all season, and to thank you for all the hard work and time you have invested to make their children better hockey players and good people.

Coach Evaluations

- HMHA uses coach surveys to obtain feedback on the abilities of the head coach and other team staff and about the experience of the players and their families. The feedback helps HMHA see ways to improve programs, and helps with coach selection for future seasons.
- Most coaches in HMHA receive excellent survey results. Knowing who those excellent coaches are is as important and knowing those that need improvement, and HMHA is committed to offering head coach positions to coaches that demonstrate strong technical skills, interpersonal skills, sportsmanship, leadership, and provide a positive hockey experience for every player on the team.
- **It has been noted that positive survey results have little correlation with wins and losses. The success and enjoyment of the hockey season is almost entirely the result of a good coach providing a fun and challenging and socially positive environment for children playing a game of hockey.**

