

JUNIOR COACH PROGRAM



*A Resource Guide
for
Junior Coaches
and Head Coaches*

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Program Objective

To support the ongoing development of young leaders within the Knights Hockey Club (Knights) by providing them with the opportunity to learn, grow and give back to the great sport of hockey now and in the future.

Junior (Jr.) Coach Defined

A current Knights or Calgary Buffaloes player, within the Knights Hockey Club boundary, who is interested in helping on ice, and supporting the Knights coaches and players on a team.

Eligibility Requirements

No experience is required to be a Jr. Coach; however, there are some requirements as outlined below.

*Note: These requirements are subject to change.

To be eligible to be a Jr. Coach, you must meet the following criteria:

a) Age requirements

- **Must be a minimum of 13 years of age.**
 - A Jr. Coach may join mid-season (up until **December 15th**) once they turn 13 and providing, they meet the other criteria.
- **Must be a maximum of 17 years of age at the start of the season.**
 - Exception: can turn 18 during the season.
- **Be a minimum of two (2) age groups above the age group they are requesting to support.**

b) **Must be a registered Knight or Calgary Buffaloes player in the current season or played on a team last year.**

- Exception: taking the year off due to injury, school, etc.

c) **Must complete the Knights Jr. Coach application before you can join as a Jr. Coach.**

- The online application link is posted on the Jr. Coach Program page of the Knights Hockey Club website.
- The application is open from October 15 through to October 31.
- **NO ONE** is permitted to 'help out' on the ice without being registered with Knights Hockey Club as team staff. Knights Hockey Club must register all coaches and Jr. Coaches on team rosters to ensure certifications and insurance coverage is in effect.

d) **A Police Information Check (PIC) is required for all Jr. Coaches aged 16+.**

- Email admin@knightshc.ca to obtain a voucher to apply for a Police Information Check (PIC).
- Request your online Police Information Check at:
<https://www.calgary.ca/cps/public-services/police-information-checks.html>
- Aim to get your Police Information Check done in September/October to ensure it is completed and then submitted to Knights Admin by the **November 15th** deadline.
- Once completed and submitted to the Knights, the Police Information Check is valid on our file for three 3 years.

e) Complete the 'Coach Initiation in Sport eModule'.

- To be rostered as a coach, Jr. Coaches must complete the required Respect in Sport for Activity Leaders course - <https://ha.respectgroupinc.com/>.
- It must be completed by the deadline of November 15th.
- Submit the payment receipt for reimbursement.

f) Must be registered on the assigned Team Staff roster as a 'Coach Apprentice' role.

- Knights Hockey Club will assign Jr. Coaches to Team Staff rosters to meet the coaching needs for specific teams.
- Information provided in the application will be considered when making Jr. Coach team assignments (i.e., a younger sibling's team or a preferred head coach).
Note: We will do our best to place the Jr. Coach on the requested team; however, in some circumstances the request may not be able to be fulfilled.
- Any Jr. Coach under the age of 15 MUST wear a helmet on the bench during games.

Important Dates / Deadlines

The following outlines an approximate timeline of important activities for Jr. Coaches during the season:

October:

- Jr. Coach completes Knights online application.
 - The application form will be posted online on the Knights Hockey Club website.
- Knights assign a Jr. Coach to a Team Staff roster.
 - Knight Admin will officially list the Jr. Coach in the Team Staff with Hockey Calgary.
 - Once assigned and registered by Knights, Jr. Coach can begin to assist with team practices, team games, and team building activities.
- Jr. Coach meets with Head Coach / Assistant Coaches to discuss role, expectations, season plan for the team, and the Jr. Coach's learning goals.

November:

- Complete Police Information Check (PIC) and submit to the Knights Admin.
 - Deadline: November 15th.
- Complete Coach Certification Requirements.
 - Deadline: November 15th.

January:

- Mid-Season review with Head Coach.

March:

- Season-end review with Knights Jr & Sr. Director of Coaches and Program Coordinator.
- Completion of the season-end Jr. Coach Program Survey.

Jr. Coach Commitment Expectations

Jr. Coaches should aim to:

- Prioritize their commitment to their own team first.
- Attend as many team activities as possible, but there are no hard rules regarding attendance.
- Discuss with, understand and adhere to the team's coaching philosophy and expectations.

Jr. Coach Roles / Responsibilities

It can be hard for Jr. Coaches to figure out where they fit into the team. Do they hang out with the players, or do they hang out with the coaches? Ideally, the Head Coach should welcome the Jr. Coach as part of the coaching team staff.

Part of your role as a Jr. Coach is to learn and develop your coaching skills. When working with your Head Coach, plan to phase in various levels of responsibility as the season progresses and your skill and comfort increase.

In conjunction with Knights Coaches, roles and responsibilities may include:

- Assist in the set-up, supervision, and demonstration of drills during practice.
- Assist with the practice flow and be involved in the regular routines of a team's practice.
- Assist with team warm-up prior to games.
- Be present on the bench during games.
- Maintain privacy of any health information shared with you as part of the coaching experience (i.e., player injury, etc.).

Below is an example timeline of what you may expect as a Jr. Coach:

October

a) Team Introductions

- Expect to learn the names of all the players on the team.
- Expect to work with the coaches by helping to demonstrate the skills and drills at practices - let your team see how well you can skate and shoot.
- Practice using your voice at every team practice in an encouraging capacity.

b) Clarify Role at Practices

- Work with the Head Coach to identify drills where you may be able to work one on one with some of the players on specific skill development while the rest are engaged in the regular drills (i.e., shooting practice, edge work, etc.).
- Work with the Head Coach to identify opportunities for you to run or demonstrate drills.
- Communicate with the players! Use your voice for coaching feedback and reinforce your coaching role.

November

a) Clarify Role on the Bench at Games

- Your Head Coach will determine the bench staff during games. Have the discussion to determine what the role of the Jr. Coach will be.
- Every team staff will have a different approach to how they prefer to run their bench during games. They may only want three (3) coaches, or they may want up the maximum allowance of five (5) coaches.

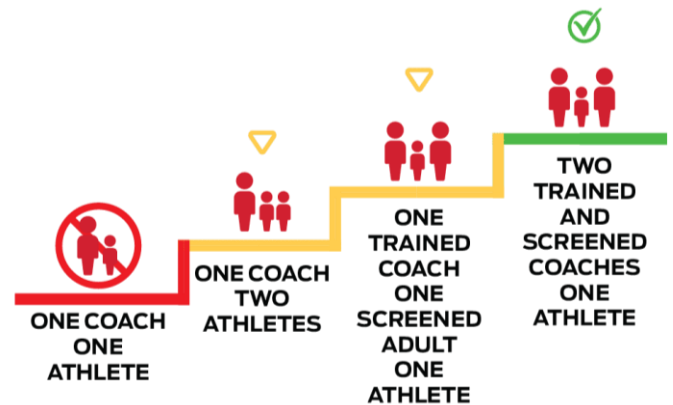
Code of Conduct

As a Jr. Coach on a team, your conduct must fall under the same code as is expected for all coaches, volunteers, parents and players in our association. Please review the Knights Code of Conduct Policy on the Knights website.

Rule of Two

A coach should NEVER be alone with one player -- there should always be at least two (2) adults present with athletes at all times (i.e., another coach or a parent).

The goal of the **Rule of Two** is to ensure all interactions and communications are open, observable, and justifiable. Its purpose is to protect participants (especially minors) and coaches who are in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring more than one adult is present. There may be exceptions for emergency situations.



Good Rule of Two Implementation Practices:

- The coach is never alone and out of sight with a participant without another screened coach or screened adult (parent volunteer) present.
- Allow the training environment to be open to observation (i.e., no closed-door interactions).
- If a coach is transporting an athlete, ensure there are two adults present.
- Consider the gender of participant(s) when selecting screened coaches and volunteers who are present.
- No one-to-one electronic messaging. Ensure all communications are to the group and/or include parents.

Jr. Coach Guidance / Tips

a) Discuss and outline your roles and responsibilities with the Head Coach when you first join your assigned team.

- If the Head Coach does not set up an introduction meeting with you, take the initiative and ask for one.
- Fill out the 'Jr. Coach Introduction & Learning Goals' worksheet in the 'Appendix' section of this Resource Guide and discuss it with your Head Coach. This information will help guide them on how to best utilize you as their Jr. Coach.

b) Ensure you keep your availability up-to-date.

- Ensure your availability is up-to-date on TeamSnap. This will help your Head Coach plan effectively for upcoming games and practices.

c) Be involved and communicate with the team.

- Show up to as many events as you can including team building, so the players know who you are.
- Talk to the players right from the start of the year, otherwise it gets hard to coach them later.
- Try your best to connect with the players, and make sure they are happy and having fun.
- You don't have to address the team as a whole all the time. You can give targeted advice to individual players.
- Don't be afraid to give input on drills. Help the players if you see them struggling.
- Be very patient with the young players and try to keep feedback simple. Be supportive of anything a player does, whether it's a mistake or a victory and no matter how small.
- Off the ice, asking them about school or other interests helps build relationships and respect.
- Make sure you support the other Coaches by helping setting up and/or demoing drills.

d) Discuss any potential issues with your Head Coach.

- If you experience any on-ice and/or off-ice issues while participating as a Jr. Coach, please address those with the Head Coach first.
- If these issues cannot be resolved at the Team level or you are uncomfortable discussing with the Head Coach, contact the Knights Director of Coaches for assistance in resolving your concerns.

Head Coach Guidance / Tips

a) Discuss and outline roles and responsibilities with the Jr. Coach when he/she first joins your team.

- Have a meeting with your Jr. Coach to introduce yourself and work with them to create a plan for how to involve and mentor your Jr. Coach.

b) Discuss your Jr. Coach's availability.

- Ensure you understand the Jr. Coach's availability for practices and/or games. Keep in mind that as players themselves, Jr. Coaches have a commitment to their own team that comes first before their volunteering role.
- Ask your Jr. Coach about any roadblocks they have with attending practices and/or games.

c) Involve your Jr. Coach on the bench! They have valuable experience to offer.

- There are no set rules regarding the role of a Jr. Coach on the team bench during games.
- This provides an opportunity for the Jr. Coach to have individual interactions with the players and cheer them on.

Appendix 1: A Guide to Introducing Your Jr. Coach

Thank you for welcoming a Jr. Coach to your team staff!

Jr. Coaches are a valuable resource for your team, and a critical strategy toward ensuring we develop Knights coaches for upcoming seasons. It is important for all Jr. Coaches to know that they are a recognized resource within the Knights community and that their volunteering is greatly valued.

The below has been created to provide you with some tips on how to mentor and utilize the skills of your Jr. Coach.

Know your Jr. Coach:

- Set-up an introduction meeting to welcome your Jr. Coach and learn about their hockey experience.
- Work with your Jr. Coach to identify goals and learning opportunities.
- Clearly communicate how you plan to involve them during practices and games.

Know the Rules:

- Jr. Coaches must be a minimum of 13 years of age. Jr. Coaches who are 17 at the start of the season, but may turn 18 during the season are permitted.
- Age 16+ must have a valid Police Information Check (PIC) letter on file with the Knights.
- Must complete the 'Coach Initiation in Sport' e-module.
- Must be a registered player in the current or previous season.
- Jr. Coaches must always be under the supervision of a qualified / certified Head Coach or Assistant Coach. They are never permitted on the ice without a certified Head or Assistant Coach.
- Any Jr. Coach under the age of 15 **MUST** wear a helmet on the bench during games.

Be a Mentor:

- Jr. Coaches are role models and future coaches. As a Head Coach, part of your responsibility is to mentor. Include them in decision-making and ask for input and ideas both on and off the ice. Some will take more encouragement than others to speak up.
- Please do NOT reduce Jr. Coaches to pylon-pushers. They have so much more to offer. Involve them by having them demonstrate drills, assist with running a skill station, or eventually planning and running a drill during practice.
- Ask the Jr. Coach to assist on the bench during games and provide insight.

Be Supportive:

- Though they are often busy and attendance can be impacted by their other commitments, they are young and learning to balance the demands on their time. They are also often still reliant on parents or other family / friends to drive them to team activities. Ensure they are included on your team attendance tracking system such as TeamSnap.
- Take your team to watch your Jr. Coach's team play a game! Your players can wear their jerseys and make posters to cheer on their Jr. Coach. It is a fun event, but it is also an important learning experience for your young players to see the older players enjoying the sport and showcasing how the game is played at the older levels. And it is also important for those older players to feel encouraged!

Appendix 2: Jr. Coach Introduction Worksheet

Fill out this sheet and provide it to your Head Coach at your introduction meeting.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone (Cell): _____

1) What is your current team name / division? _____

2) What position do you typically play and prefer to play? _____

3) Hockey Experience (i.e., how many years have you played and at what levels?)

4) Have you coached hockey or any other sport before?

5) What would you like to learn as a Jr. Coach this season?

Appendix 3: Sample Coach Recommendation Letter

Re: Letter of Recommendation for _____.

It is my distinct pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for _____. In my experience, _____ has proven himself/herself to be a huge asset to our team.

I have served as _____'s coach for the last three years. During that time, I have seen him/her grow and develop into a very capable young man/woman. I have been impressed with his/her integrity and leadership ability. Hockey is a demanding sport and _____ more than meets the challenge by pushing himself/herself and others to be the best they can be both on and off the ice.

There have been occasions when _____ has had to hold his/her teammates accountable. This is not an easy task, particularly for a teenager. However, _____ has no problem with straight-talk when it is necessary and is not afraid to speak up when things are not working as they should. In short, _____'s communication skills and focus on the task at hand make him/her a natural leader.

I have found _____ exceptionally dependable and consistent in his/her approach to the sport of hockey. _____ balances an academic workload as a student along with a busy practice and game schedule. He/she has earned his/her place as a leader on our team and is well respected by coaches and his/her teammates.

In short, _____ is a stronger team because of _____'s involvement due to all of the qualities that I have mentioned above. I cannot recommend _____ enough and hope that he/she can be a part of the Knights Jr. Coach Program.

If you have any further questions about _____ or this letter of recommendation, please do not hesitate to contact me at #####@#####.ca or on my cell phone (###) ### ####.

Yours Sincerely, _____
Head Coach