

# Hockey Mom Sense

# 2013



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## 10 THINGS GOOD HOCKEY PARENTS KNOW ABOUT HOCKEY

1/17/13

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By [Melissa Walsh](#)



To understand hockey, you have to be aware of the core reason driving any hockey player at any level to choose to play hockey: it's the love of the game. Whether a player is a mite, a pro player, or a beer leaguer, he won't play, I mean really play with the will to win, unless he has within him a dynamic passion for playing his best, a joy of being a hockey player. Good hockey parents are aware of this overarching hockey truth, which motivates their approach to hockey parenting. Good hockey parents know that only one thing fuels a kid to play hockey to his or her best ability -- a self-driven and self-nourished love for the game.

Below are ten more things good hockey parents know about hockey:

### 1. **Playing hockey is difficult.**

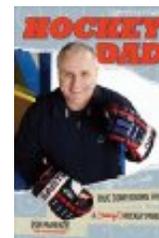
The most efficient means of becoming a good hockey parent is simple: play hockey. Not only is playing hockey the best way to appreciate the difficulty of moving a puck with a stick on ice as fast as you can through traffic; it is the only way to feel the joy of being a hockey player.

### 2. **The kids can't hear you from behind the glass, and shouldn't anyway.**

Cheering is friendly white noise in a rink, but screaming is not. It's just annoying for the people nearby. Most glass-lickers give themselves away as not knowing much about hockey. And even if they do know something, they don't know what the coach is specifically instructing to develop his team and compete.

### 3. **You gotta lose to know how to win.**

As Steven Tyler sings in "Dream On," it's true that losing teaches skills for winning. Losing grows humility and strength in character and allows adults to model and encourage the benefits of perseverance and hard work to kids. Losing also creates a baseline for a coach to use as a measurement for development. For example, if at the beginning of a season, a team loses to a more highly skilled team by six goals, but ties the same team later in the season, the coach has a metric to gauge how his team is developing.

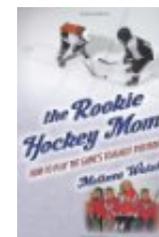


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#### 4. Good refs “manage” the game, not necessarily call everything.

The on-ice officials don't call every penalty and infraction. It's impossible to call everything, and it's not even ideal for an official to blow the whistle for everything that may sort of resemble an offense. The game is just too fast. Good refs manage the game by protecting the flow of the game while ensuring the game is not being played recklessly. This officiating finesse becomes increasingly more important up the youth hockey levels. Bantam and Midget games are played so fast, so tenaciously, and fueled primarily by testosterone surges. Good refs at these levels apply wisdom in making calls to avoid fighting and overly aggressive tactics, for example, by sending opposing players to the box with offset roughing calls, giving them time to cool down.

#### 5. There are no shortcuts to becoming an elite hockey player.

Nepotism might get your kid a spot on an elite team for a season or two, but it won't make him an elite athlete. Only self-driven hard work and determination will sustain a kid with some God-given strength and talent at an elite level of hockey. Forcing a kid to take 500 shots in the garage every night won't do it either. A player's regimen of working on his strength and skills outside team practice must be his idea. He has to want to become an elite hockey player on his own. Parents can only encourage and applaud his effort, not drive it.

#### 6. Team momentum requires a team dynamic.

Any coach will tell you that without the ingredient of fraternity, or sorority for girls, teams do not experience team success. There must be a bond among the players. They must play for each other, supporting each other. Good hockey parents don't encourage or contribute to gossip or criticism of their son's or daughter's teammates. And they do what they can to support a climate of friendship among the players in the room and the parents in the lobby.

#### 7. The kids will remember a good coach, not a team's season rankings.

Good hockey parents are more concerned with finding their youth player a good coach than landing him on a highly ranked team. Good coaches are not necessarily the winningest coaches, especially among the little-kid ranks of Mites and Squirts. Good hockey development requires good habits. And game-winning tactics, like a consistent dump-and-chase approach, are not the same as good hockey habits, like growing a confidence to try to dangle the puck through traffic or feed a pass to a teammate under pressure.

#### 8. There is a language known as hockey speak.

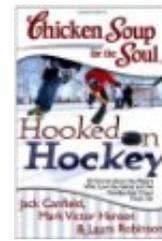
“Headman” is verb. “Sauce” does not come in a can or jar. Good hockey parents are proficient in hockey speak.

#### 9. Hockey has a code, and it's good.

School has a code. Hockey has a code. Good hockey parents teach their kids that these codes are both good, yet different. They instruct their kids not to mix the two codes up, and they stress that the hockey code carries over into adulthood.

#### 10. Each youth hockey player must own his or her hockey experience.

The youth hockey experience is a gift to kids given to them by their parents. There is no ROI for a hockey parent other than knowing that their kid is enjoying hockey and growing a love for the game that will likely last a lifetime.



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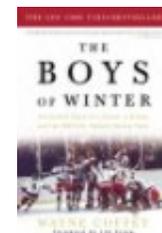
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