

Tucker Hockey Profile

Meet the Instructor - Jim Hepburn



What is your hockey background?

Currently, I am working on my 14th year as the Head Instructor for Hockey North America's Adult Beginner Program. I also played in the Hockey North America League from 1988 to 1996. I also played a lot of shinny and pick up hockey over the years.

When and how did you initially get involved with Tucker Hockey?

Rex started coming out to our Hockey North America Beginner Program as a Guest Power Skating Instructor in 2003, giving the HNA beginners a sample of power skating and what Tucker Hockey could offer them. Rex saw me work with the Hockey North America beginner players and liked my rapport with the players and thought that my skills would be a good fit for his programs. I started in 2005 working with Tucker Hockey Minor and Adult groups.

What is the most enjoyable part of instructing for you?

I like to see the sense of accomplishment from the players who are under my care. Working one on one with the students can be very gratifying because they get individual attention and immediate feedback to enhance their progression.

What, if anything, has instructing with Tucker Hockey taught you?

There are many challenges when teaching different age and skill levels, and many ways of addressing and teaching skating and hockey skills.

What challenges or difficulties have you experienced while being an assistant instructor?

Having to deal with Rex – he is so keen that he is worse than a Drill Sergeant, just kidding ha ha. His programs are built

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Editor's note:

Recently, I had a good chat with Jim Hepburn, Instructor for Tucker Hockey. Jim has been a valuable member of the Tucker Hockey team for the past 5 years. He has helped teach power skating and hockey skills to various Minor and Adult groups. Here is a summary of our conversation.

Jim, tell us a bit about yourself.

I am a true Albertan; I was born in Edmonton and moved to Calgary 30 years ago. I am married to Barb, a great lady, and have two children, Kelsea and Casey, and two small dogs. I truly enjoy being with people.

What does hockey mean to you?

It's a great Canadian tradition, a popular form of recreation for both men and women of all ages, and it's also an excellent way to exercise.

Are you coaching any other sports at the present time, or have you coached in the past?

I am still heavily involved in coaching Ringette; I'm in my 16th year. Over the years I have coached my kids in soccer, baseball, lacrosse, and, of course, hockey.

“A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”

~Henry Brooks Adams

Jim Hepburn (Cont'd from 11)

for players to succeed. Most major challenges or difficulties with skills are broken down into minimal challenges so everyone feels a sense of accomplishment.

Any fond memories you'd like to share with us about your experience instructing?

Overall, I really enjoy coaching, "It's like paying it forward". I hope the players I have coached will go on and one day coach and get as much satisfaction as I do. The student will eventually surpass the teacher, and that's what keeps the sport growing and getting better. It feels real good when someone you have coached goes on to accomplish great things in their sport. My daughter Kelsea is already in her 6th year of coaching Ringette that started when she was just 16. My son is now an assistant Instructor, working with me in the Hockey North America Adult Beginner Program and shows great promise. I guess the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree. As Coach Rex often jokes "They have good genes", that's because he knows my wife has a Phys Ed degree and has also coached many teams in her teaching career.

What sessions, that Tucker Hockey offers, do you prefer to help instruct with – Minor or Adult?

Adults – They appreciate their development more because they comprehend and feel their ongoing development.
Kids – Most don't know how they got better, for most it "just happens".

Are there any other recreational activities, outside of hockey that you participate in?

I am an avid golfer and have played slo-pitch, water sports, skiing, racquetball, and squash over the years.

Do you have any tips for other individuals who'd like to participate in instructing?

Be approachable, make it fun, don't talk down to your students, and be on an even level with your group's skill and aptitude. It's important to adjust to your audience. Everyone wants to learn and be better at what they do, so it's important to create a good positive learning environment. I pride myself on my people skills and being personable with my students.

What advice would you like to offer hockey coaches, parents and players about the importance of skating, and why they should invest the time and money towards

quality skating instruction?

In today's game, it's all about speed and agility. Without a strong skating foundation, players will not excel. Skating is the most important hockey skill. All players require countless hours of good instruction and practice time.

What does the future hold for Jim Hepburn?

I will continue to work on my coaching techniques. I feel my strengths are my people skills and my outgoing personality. I hope that the players I have taught will be able to succeed in their future endeavors, whatever they may be. I have often been called "Mr. Care". During my many years of coaching Ringette, I have told my Ringette players "The game is for you girls, not for me". I have coached three teams in one season, and I genuinely do it for the girls.

Editor's note:

Gentleman Jim. Having spent countless hours on the ice with Coach Jim, the following personal traits come to mind. He is positive, upbeat, personable, caring, and he has a great sense of humor. Jim is too modest to talk about his many Ringette and hockey accomplishments, so I will attempt to do that. He has coached more than 1200 players over the last 14 years in the Hockey North America Beginner Program, helping beginners learn the fundamentals of hockey and instilling and growing their love of the game. Jim has been a dedicated volunteer coach in the Calgary Ringette system for more than 16 years. He has taught from the Bunnies to the Open 18+ level (5 year olds to 35+ years old). Being a Head Coach for nearly two decades, he has won 12 City Championships, 10 Provincial Championships, and 1 Western Canada Championship. As well, his Ringette teams have won the prestigious ESSO Gold Ring Tournament 6 times in his decorated coaching career. He has a soft spot with the kids, often bringing popsicles to distribute to the kids at the conclusion of a week-long Tucker Hockey program. He is a people person who gives you a lift every time you're in his company. He definitely cares about the players that he coaches. Jim, my friend, I have valued your contributions to Tucker Hockey over the years...much appreciated! I look forward to many fun times on the ice in the years ahead!

**"Who dares to teach must
never cease to learn"**

~ John Cotton Dana