



Volume 5 No. 1  
Issue #12  
Winter 2008

For the LOVE of the GAME!

# Hockey Zones

Tucker Hockey's official newsletter—reinforcing hockey's POSITIVES to all ages!



## Celebrating 10 Years of Tucker Hockey!

The start of the 2008 calendar year marks a milestone in the history of Tucker Hockey. We are celebrating 10 years of on ice instruction. We have instructed players from semi – pro down to tyke and from ages 5 up to 73 years of age with a broad level of hockey skills and background as well as personal goals.

We have operated minor hockey group programs, adult hockey group programs, 1 on 1 coaching, customized programs, and worked with minor hockey teams and associations and adult recreational teams.

The core of our programs is power skating. However, we have taught other technical skills such as passing, puck control, shooting and checking as well as individual and team tactics and elite power skating and conditioning programs.

Hard to believe nearly a decade as passed! Reflecting back over this period, we have fond memories of various people, places and events from the Tucker Hockey journey.

Here's a summary of some of the lighter moments from the diary of Coach Rex. I trust you may find some of these stories amusing!

The idea for Tucker Hockey was hatched in the Summer of 1997. I was honing my craft as a power skating instructor at a hockey camp in the Czech Republic. I had seen a business card for a hockey school and wondered, "Why can't I do that myself for a living?" "For the next few years, I diligently did my research; start up costs, market analysis, and core on ice curriculums. Finding a niche in a Calgary hockey school saturated market was the challenge and the key to future success.

The first program, in the Fall of 1999, was with a group of Adult Recreational hockey players. After some hiccups with settling the first session start date, we finally recruited our first class of six players. From there, the rest is history!

From 1999 to the Summer of 2002, Tucker Hockey was basically a part-time enterprise. We grew our

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**Look Inside for  
More Great Sports Tips**

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**“Destiny is not a matter of chance,  
it is a matter of choice,  
it is not a thing to be waited for,  
it is a thing to be acheived”**

**–William Jennings Bryan**

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**Flex Systems**  
**Flexys**  
Publishing

Quality Publications  
1994-2008

Hockey Zones is published for  
Tucker Hockey Enterprises Ltd. by  
Flexys Systems Publishing Ltd.

sales@flexys.ab.ca  
www.flexys.ab.ca

Issues: Fall, Winter,  
Spring/Summer

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**271-4101**

## 10 Years (cont'd. from cover)

niche into more sessions, and more programs with more players, both minor and adult.

In the Summer of 2002, the brave decision was made to go full-time with Tucker Hockey. A true leap of faith moment indeed! With a business plan and \$2,000 in my bank account, I ambitiously set out to build Tucker Hockey into a full time operation.

This coincided with my last trip to coach hockey in the Czech Republic, and my first lesson in "expect the unexpected" when operating my hockey business. While returning from my European trip, my ticket from Munich, Germany was mistakenly changed from reserve to standby. I had to get back to Calgary on time, as my first full-time Minor Hockey Program was scheduled for the next day! I sweated bricks for a couple hours but finally got on the plane and arrived back in Calgary on schedule.

On one of my earlier minor power skating programs I had a child approach me and say "Coach Rex, I have a problem with my hockey equipment". After some investigation, we discovered that in her haste to get her son on the ice, the boy's mother had inadvertently crossed the Velcro straps of the shoulder pads across her son's chest, creating a mini straight-jacket! No wonder the young lad felt uncomfortable!

On another occasion, we had a child's hockey pants fall down around his ankles during a skating drill, leaving him in his long johns at centre-ice! It was an embarrassing moment!

During one of our Saturday afternoon adult sessions, we had a lady demonstrate her amazing flexibility during the pre-skate static stretches. While sitting on the ice to stretch our hamstrings, with the skates wide apart, she was able to touch her chin on the ice. After showing up her male-dominated group, she informed us, with a smirk, that she was a former gymnast. It hurt to watch her stretch!

There was the first time skater that, in his enthusiasm to get on the ice, forgot to remove his skate guards and went skidding across the ice on his butt, spread eagled with arms and legs flailing. He had to embarrassingly crawl back to the bench to discover what had caused his tumble. As instructors, we looked away with a smirk trying to ignore the situation so as to not cause the beginner any further embarrassment.

No one said that the coaching profession doesn't have its hazards. While teaching a peewee team at Lake Bonavista, and conducting a skating drill, I had a child fall and slide into me from behind. The

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Next Issue:

Spring/Summer 2008

## Features

- Letters to the Editor/Prize Winner Announcements
- Overcoming Obstacles – Health
- Missing the Cut – What's Next?
- Kid's Hockey Advancement Society
- Tucker Hockey Promo DVD
- Power Play Quarterback

## Welcome to Hockey Zones

The official newsletter of Tucker Hockey.

The Winter 2007 issue consists of fresh hockey education and teaching articles, an expression of hockey philosophies and viewpoints, addresses various hockey issues for public discussion, provides features on hockey people at the "Calgary grass roots rink level", features upcoming Tucker Hockey Adult and Minor hockey programs, and provides hockey quotes, stories, and prize contests. In summary, it will create good hockey... "Food for Thought!"

Enjoy your hockey—the World's greatest sport! – and I hope you enjoy our Tucker Hockey Newsletter!

–Past Issues Available at www.tuckerhockey.com–

## 10 Years (cont'd. from 3)

end result was a concussion. This led to us to ensure that all of our on ice instructors wear helmets. Not just myself, my instructors have also had concussions and cuts that have needed medical attention, from five to 36 stitches.

Scheduling has always been a challenge with the limited supply of city ice. Early on, we had scheduled a ten week session, not realizing that Super Bowl Sunday fell on one of the scheduled evenings. The result was a session consisting of two instructors and one student. Talk about instructor to student ratio!

Dealing with kids of all ages on a day to day basis, always provides interesting interactions. I was introduced to one child as "Mr. Tucker" by his mom. I said "No, please call me Rex or Coach Rex". When I made the correction, I thought we were good to go. The next day, my young student said to me first when we stepped on the ice together "What are we doing today Mr. Rex?" At least, he got the Rex part right! It was cute!

We always end our last session of the ten session adult recreational programs with the players having the added challenge of shooting on the goalies. Well, for this one session, one of our selected goaltenders arrived at the rink and started getting dressed to play when he suddenly realized that he hadn't brought his goalie pads! A "sparkling" moment for sure! His excuse, "Well, sometimes I play out"!

Speaking of goaltenders, we had one poor guy come out to an early session and we gave him a rough time. In the warm up, the instructors and I accidentally hit him in the head, the groin, and dinged his catching hand, plus we shattered his water bottle when we missed him. As if that wasn't enough, he broke his wrist playing tennis a week later. We're not taking any credit for that!

Over the last ten years, we have seen students of all calibers. On one occasion, an adult player showed up with brand new skates, but he had forgotten to get them sharpened! It undoubtedly affected his balance and edge control for that first skate!

In the early years, I would book the ice

first and then try to create a hockey program. One Christmas holiday season, I had booked ice, but was unable to get enough students to run a program. Rather than just eat the cost of the ice and leave it empty, I organized a game of shinny with some friends to cover the cost of the ice. While scrimmaging, I was struck in the forehead by a deflected puck. The resulting cut required a trip to Foothills Hospital for repairs, and 15 stitches. While waiting, I discussed the idea of having pizza delivered with one of my fellow instructors, – it was a long stay in the waiting room, and we hadn't eaten all day. It kept the hospital staff in stitches themselves. You have to see the humor in everything, I guess!

Minor Hockey sessions are always challenging and provide a broad mix of kids. During a drill at one session, we had one bulky child, who was six years old but looked like he was ten scream at another smaller child when he wanted possession of the puck. We're not sure if it was the shouting, or size intimidation, but the smaller child broke down into a crying fit, to the point he could hardly breathe. It took considerable encouragement to get him back on the ice. Kids will be kids! Personality plus at times!

Players aren't always the only ones forgetting things. After a session at a North West arena, I was having a conversation with the general manager that continued for some time. I left the arena and drove home that afternoon around 4:00 pm. The next day, I drove to my next session at a South West arena for a noon hour program. I opened up the trunk of my car at 11:30 am and my heart skipped a few beats! No hockey gear! Where was it? Then I realized I had left my equipment behind the day before at the North West arena! I had to drive all the way up Crowchild Trail to retrieve my equipment, thankfully stored by the arena staff, and hurry back to lead the session. I was only ten minutes late, on the ice at 12:10 pm and luckily no speeding tickets! A lesson to be learned for sure! Preparation... preparation!

One of the drills we do with Minor Hockey players is the Gorilla Drill. The

purpose is to encourage proper knee bend while skating. We add the gorilla sounds to make it enjoyable and fun for the kids. In one session, when I asked the kids for a good gorilla sound, their atom coach chimed in and did the best Gorilla sounds I had ever heard! I cracked up laughing and said "That was good, almost like we rehearsed it!" It was the start of a great time with the kids and coaches on their practice ice time.

I remember chatting with a minor hockey power skating group last Spring at Southland Leisure Centre. It was 9:30 am on a Saturday morning. One of the kids seemed half asleep and he projected a look of not wanting to be there. I asked him, why the lack of enthusiasm. He said "My Dad made me come to the rink". My reply was "It could be worse, your Dad could be getting you to take out the garbage, mold the lawn, or shovel snow!" The kids reply, "Well, my Dad plays me for doing that!" Guess not everyone as the same love for the game!

We always try to have fun with the kids. One thing we do is use a sponge puck to get a rise out of the kids in the dressing room. I often say "Have you seen my Jarome Iginla autographed puck?" On one occasion, I had tossed the puck to a kid and he was just like a deer in the headlights. He just watched the puck as it came towards him, and it bounced off his forehead. Although surprised, he was very happy and relieved that it was not a real puck! Even his Dad had a good chuckle over that one... we laughed together for quite a while!

Then there was the time I did a session with an Adult Recreational League group. One of the players was having trouble controlling the puck in the warm up drill. After checking his stick, I discovered that instead of stripping off the old tape, he had been taping over it, creating a thick, spongy stick blade. This made it impossible to feel the puck on his stick blade, much less control it. There must have been a couple of rolls of tape on his stick!

Over the years we've tried to take on some special projects. We once

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## 10 Years (cont'd. from 12)

organized a hockey camp in my home province of Newfoundland over Christmas. It was one of the worst years for snowfall on record in the province, and highway closures kept one of the instructors from making it to the camp at all. It had been so bad, that even our flight out was cancelled due to the backlog of cancelled flights. It took us two days, and a very, very kind booking agent, before we eventually made it onto a plane and back to Calgary, via Halifax.

I was teaching a novice team. After the group finished a power skating drill I lead the group with a couple of quick laps around the rink. We stopped at the coach mate board. I was ready to explain the next drill, when one of the players looked up at me with his puppy dog eyes as big as saucers. He curiously said "Did you play Pro Hockey? Do you know Jarome?" I found it amusing, I guess he was somewhat impressed with by the ole coache's skating.

There was also a one on one session where the player brought only his skates! His Mother mistakenly thought that power skating was just skating! Needless to say, he made sure his Mom had all his equipment for the next session.

As instructors, we also get to have some fun with the groups. I was doing some instruction with an adult team and they challenged my instructors and me to a game, their team versus myself, two instructors, plus a goaltender. I won't mention that we beat them by a score of 18-5, but they did learn enough to win their next game against their friends. Of course, they did have some coaching help from yours truly behind the bench.

"I try to give my all  
whenever  
I feel something is  
important"

- Mena Suvari

The Hockey Zones newsletter was born in the Spring of 2004. It was the result of turning a bad situation into a positive. I was advertising in a newsletter that was posted in the city arenas, and planned to be a part owner of that newsletter. The owner had decided to sell out to a rival company and I needed an avenue to advertise my hockey programs. So I decided to create my own newsletter. The first issues were eight pages long, and the current issues run anywhere from 36 to 40 pages, with advertisers and many contributing writers.

Tucker Hockey has allowed me to fulfill the life-long childhood dream of making a living in the hockey world. I value the lifestyle it has provided me with, as well

as the fitness and health that goes with it. Also, the kind words and testimonials from thousands of past participants, both Minor, Adult and 1 on 1, and the abundance of hockey friendships I have cultivated over the years are very much appreciated.

Yes, I have dedicated many long hours to the success of my hockey business. However, I love what I do. It's not a cross but a choice. I try to teach not only hockey skills but life skills and hopefully make some sort of difference.

George Lightfoot, business trainer and consultant in London, Ontario says the following on starting and being a successful small business person.

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Tucker Hockey

## World of Instruction

Since 1999, the spectrum of past participants in Tucker Hockey Power Skating, Hockey Skills Development and 1 on 1 coaching programs have varied from beginner to professional players. Thousands of registered players have ranged in age from 5 to 73, with a broad level of hockey skills and background as well as personal goals.

Past participants have included the following categories of players:

<b>Professional</b>	<b>Learn to Skate</b>
<b>Collegiate</b>	<b>Calgary Recreational Hockey - Midget</b>
<b>WHL</b>	<b>Minor Hockey Coaches' Clinics</b>
<b>Junior A</b>	<b>Minor Teams</b>
<b>Junior B</b>	<b>Minor Hockey Association Projects</b>
<b>Midget AAA</b>	<b>Customized Minor Hockey Programs (Arranged with Hockey Parents )</b>
<b>Midget AA</b>	
<b>Midget AA (Girls)</b>	<b>Adult Recreational</b>
<b>Midget A</b>	<b>Ladies Teams</b>
<b>Bantam AAA</b>	<b>Men's Teams</b>
<b>Bantam AA</b>	<b>Male</b>
<b>Minor Hockey – Community</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Midget</b>	<b>Father and Son</b>
<b>Bantam</b>	<b>Mother and Daughter</b>
<b>Bantam Girls</b>	<b>Grandfather and Grandson</b>
<b>Pee wee</b>	<b>Husband and Wife</b>
<b>Pee wee Girls</b>	
<b>Atom</b>	
<b>Novice</b>	
<b>Tyke</b>	

# ***Ten Years***

## ***Cont. from 25***

“It’s more important to decide first whether you have what it takes to be an entrepreneur. The age old question about even starting your own business successfully depends on the ability, motivation, energy and support of each individual. Everybody is different. Do what you love with passion. Entrepreneurs who survive the five and ten year benchmarks usually have a high primary social motivational need of achievement. In other words they refuse to fail.”

I wish to extend a special thanks to the following people, who have helped Tucker Hockey prosper and grow over the last ten years, who include:

Lyle Hanna	Ern Rideout
Nicole Hankel	Karen Adler
David Mahoney	Michael White
Lisa Francis	

as well as numerous instructors, support staff, contributing writers, advertisers and sponsors who have helped out over the years.

Where will Tucker Hockey be ten years from now? Probably at a local rink near you. My goal is to be skating at the tender age of 80!

**“See you on the ice!”**

*-Coach Rex*

*PS: Warmest appreciation to those who have experienced the passion of Tucker Hockey! All the best on and off the ice!*

“If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll end up somewhere else.”

*-Yogi Berra*

“At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person”

*-Albert Schweitzer*