

Player Evaluations—(cont'd. from p.7)

to make good decisions with the puck (offensive creativity) and make good decisions without the puck (offensive support and especially defensive play) are the cores of having good hockey sense.

Character is often difficult to teach. It comes from within: a player's commitment to excellence, to wanting to improve on every aspect of his/her game, to playing every shift like it's the last one, to having a great work ethic, to giving a second effort, to being a team player (unselfish), to having the ability to overcome adversities, and to having the "will to win"!

During the month of September, hundreds of volunteer coaches and evaluators will spend countless hours doing their very best to place players in the proper divisions; if a player stands out, it will increase his/her chances to be noticed by the evaluators.

Remember: A player wants to be noticed for all the right reasons this upcoming season!

Good luck players and parents during this year's September try-outs!

—Coach Rex

Coach Rex's Corner



Today's Topic: *Player Evaluations*

Another exciting minor hockey season will begin in just a couple months; meanwhile, throughout the Summer months, parents will enroll their children in various hockey schools, power skating programs, and conditioning camps to help improve their hockey skills and, ultimately, to improve their chances come try-out season. During the month of September, player evaluations will be a popular and often controversial topic of discussion at the many local hockey rinks throughout the City.

Based on my own personal experiences of coaching within the Calgary Minor Hockey system, being involved with Hockey Alberta's under-16 program as an evaluator and coach, training with elite hockey players from Junior A to Pro level, conducting player evaluations and scouting for the Canmore (formerly Bow Valley) Eagles and for the Langley Thunder at Junior A tier II level, and preparing evaluation report cards on minor hockey players at Canadian Hockey Camp-Europe in the Czech Republic for several Summers, I offer the following viewpoint on the "controversial" topic of player evaluations.

When evaluating or scouting players, hockey personnel look for a variety of skills and personal traits. Every evaluator may not be on the same page with regards to the top criteria used to assess an individual player's skills or future potential, but a player "must stand out", "excel in a certain area of the game", or showcase a "special skill". During tryouts, a player needs to get noticed by scoring a great goal, making a super pass, deking through several players, giving a big hit, exhibiting a hard and accurate shot, skating like the wind, etc. S/he must **stand out on a consistent basis** to be labelled "a player". Whatever a player does well, excellent speed, for example, it is important to showcase that speed **to be noticed!**

While attending the 1994 Hockey Canada Coaching Conference in Calgary, I had the pleasure to talk with Paul Henry who had just

completed the assignment of being Director of Player Personnel for the 1994 Team Canada Olympic silver medal-winners. Following working with Hockey Canada, Paul has worked with the Florida Panthers organisation.

Because he was such a seasoned scout, I asked Paul: "What are the three most important components you look for when scouting or evaluating players"? I have always remembered his answers:

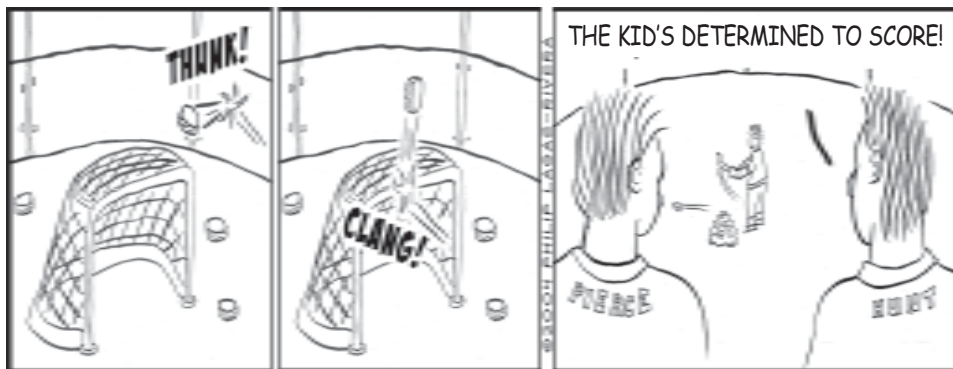
- No: 1 Skating
- No: 2 Hockey Sense
- No: 3 Character

Skating is to hockey what running is to soccer because skating is the foundation upon which all other skills are built. It is the most important skill of ice hockey. In order to advance through the hockey system from Bantam to Midget, Midget to Junior A, and Junior A to Pro, etc., a player must be a great skater—especially in today's game. A player whose game consists of great speed and skating agility will excel to a higher level of play.

Also, the level of performance attained by a player in passing, shooting, checking, and puck control is directly related to his/her skating ability. The time spent improving a player's skating is a worthwhile investment due to the carry-over value to all other aspects of the game. Personally, this has been reinforced more and more now that I have been teaching power skating in Canada and Europe over the past seven years.

Hockey Sense is how you "think the game". This Sense was the main reason why Wayne Gretzky played better than anyone else. He had the special ability to "Read and React", to see the ice, to see a play develop, to anticipate where his teammates would be or where the puck would go—all on a higher level than anyone who has ever played the game. The ability

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Player Evaluation

The following is a player evaluation scouting report that can be used to self-assess and to learn about various criteria used.

Rating Scale:				
1	Poor	2-3	Weak	4-5 Satisfactory
6-7	Good	8-9	Very Good	10 Excellent

General Qualities – All Players

- 1: Concentration _____
- 2: Mental / Emotional Control _____
- 3: Physical Strength _____
- 4: Conditioning _____
- 5: Coach ability _____
- 6: Attitude _____
- 7: Living Habits _____
- 8: Drive / Intensity _____
- 9: Hockey Sense / Read & React _____
- 10: Leadership Abilities _____

Skill Techniques – All skaters

- 1: Forward Skating _____
- 2: Backward Skating _____
- 3: Skating Agility _____
- 4: Puck Control _____
- 5: Shooting _____
- 6: Checking / Physical Play _____
- 7: Passing / Receiving _____

Forwards

- 1: Puck Support _____
- 2: Scoring Ability _____
- 3: Play Making and Puck Movement _____
- 4: Defensive Play _____
- 5: Face Offs (Where Applicable) _____

Defensemen:

- 1: Puck Movement / Play Making _____
- 2: Net Play _____
- 3: Board Play _____
- 4: Read the Rush _____
- 5: Strength / Strong on the Puck. _____

Goalies:

- 1: Reflexes _____
- 2: Cover the Angles _____
- 3: Control Puck/Rebound Control _____
- 4: Agility _____
- 5: Anticipation of Shot / Play _____
- 6: Consistency of Play _____
- 7: Style of Play Butter Fly _____
Stand Up _____