



When is Too Much Hockey Too Much?

Are kids playing too much Hockey?

The busy and sometimes hectic regular minor hockey season is over for another year. Should kids continue to play Spring and/or Summer Hockey as well? This question often generates discussion and many heated debates in today's Hockey circles.

By Rex Tucker

Are kids playing too much hockey? When is too much... too much? My opinion, it truly depends on the individual child.

The Pros play or train 11 months of the year – it's a year round commitment for the elite – it's their profession. Over the past decade the minor hockey system has evolved into a year round affair for many players and families as well.

According to an Alberta Hockey Now newspaper survey several years ago, 21 percent of players would never stop playing hockey and over 68 percent would be active in the Spring and Summer months – since there are approximately 12,000 Calgary minor hockey players, there appears an on-going demand for hockey development.

Personally, as a kid growing up in rural Newfoundland, I developed a true passion for the game, often skating and playing shinny on a near by pond from the early hours of the morning until it became too dark to see the puck – six or seven hours straight on many occasions! When growing up, I couldn't get enough of the sport to quench my thirst! Guess it's carried over to my adult hood life as well.

Last year I spent over 560 hours on the ice instructing various types of power skating and hockey skills development programs! I love the game and my childhood dream has always been to make a living in our great game. It's a lifestyle for Rex, the coach and businessman. I often say to kids, who I am


instructing on the ice, "one of my favorite places to hang out is the hockey rink. It's my sanctuary!" I truly enjoy teaching players of all ages five to 65+ who love the game and wish to improve their skating and hockey skills.

But this is not for everyone. One must be careful of burnout, others prefer a little more balance in their life... not Tucker!

Today's kids, especially those living in the larger centers, can find artificial ice to play on year round. Hockey schools and conditioning camps are numerous in August prior to September tryouts. The minor hockey season runs from September to March. Christmas, Easter, and Spring tournaments, three on three pond hockey leagues, numerous power skating and hockey skills development programs as well operate throughout the year.

Often parents are signing their kids up for various hockey programs and tournaments but the kids don't seem enthusiastic about participating – rather the kids should be dragging the parents to the local rink.

What is the Best Thing to Equip Your Child With for Hockey?



- a) \$500 Top of the line skates
- b) \$275 Graphite Stick
- c) Love of the Game

Today, some parents are living their hockey dreams through their children and invest too much emotionally into the sport. As well, parents often buy the best equipment for their ten year old child such as \$500 top of the line pair of skates and \$275 graphite sticks. Good equipment is a necessity but not the best equipment – rather the love of the game, a dedication to improve one's hockey skills and a certain amount of god given natural ability are the keys to excelling! When growing up, children should try other sports such as soccer, swimming etc to discover which sport one truly excels and enjoys best.