



Volume 1 No:1  
2004-Summer

For the LOVE of the GAME!

# Hockey Zones

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

## Welcome!

*Welcome to Hockey Zones*—The official newsletter of Tucker Hockey.

This 2004-Summer issue is our inaugural publication.

Our quarterly publication will deliver fresh hockey education and teaching articles, address various minor hockey issues for public discussion, provide features on hockey people, hockey players, and hockey teams at the Calgary grassroots level, publishing upcoming Tucker Hockey programs and Calgary hockey events, provide hockey quotes, stories, quizzes, 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 quarterly Tucker Hockey Newsletter:

## The Key to Sports Fundamentals

*By Lyle Hanna*

There are key fundamentals that we must master in order to build our skills. Developing our skills plays a major role in determining to what level we will play our game. With skill development comes confidence, which begets creativity, which will

Basic skills can always be relied upon to expand or correct our abilities at any level of play. When things go wrong, we are usually straying into bad performance habits. We may find ourselves taking the "lazy way out" (cheating ourselves) and subconsciously reinforcing these bad habits with repetitive use. In more highly competitive levels our next stop is the bench; then to a lower league; and often—with a little luck—we will at least come back to playing recreationally to soothe our body, mind, and spirit.

For the younger players in local minor hockey, poor basic skills usually mean being relegated to lower and lower levels and because some of their chums are playing at higher levels, discouragement sets in, and these players quit the game for which they once had such a passion.

Good about grinding out the work necessary to hone those skills needed in competition. And when necessary in any stage of a player's development, revisit those fundamentals to make them "second nature" so one does not have to think about them in the heat of competition...allowing them to come naturally. Developing basic skills with players constantly and instinctively to refine their tactics to beat the competition fairly. And then they can get real creative!

The importance of growing one's passion through growing one's skills, is very important to player enjoyment and success. The importance of developing basic fundamentals is true from Tyke level to the NHL level.

Returning to the "fundamentals" at the NHL level? It is true. This point was never better confirmed to me than at the Hockey Canada's International Coaching Conference held in Calgary in 1989. The presenter was Jacques Martin, the Florida Panthers' new coach—a man of intelligence and integrity who has paid his dues grinding through other coaching assignments at Ottawa, Chicago, and St. Louis, as well as in the major junior and college ranks.

Jacques told the story of a very tough season that his Chicago Blackhawks got into during his tenure as coach there. Through October and November the team hardly earned a win and was so deep into losing that they were not only mired in the basement of the league but were also mired in dejection, self pity, and mental exhaustion—and no amount of changing team tactics or psychological ploys was changing that situation.

During the first week of December, the coach-

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# Tucker Hockey

Providing quality year-round professional consultations, instruction and services to hockey enthusiasts/stakeholders

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Operating Minor Hockey Group Programs</b><br><small>Spring, Summer, Christmas &amp; Easter</small><br><br><b>Power Skating</b><br><b>Player Development</b><br><b>Checking Clinics</b> | <b>Working with Individual Minor Hockey Teams</b><br><small>October - March</small><br><br><b>Power Skating Practices</b>                                     | <b>Operating Adult Recreational Group Programs (Ages 22 - 65+)</b><br><small>Winter, Spring, Summer &amp; Fall</small><br><br><b>Power Skating</b><br><b>Player Development</b>       |
| <b>Offering "1 on 1" Coaching</b><br><small>Year Round</small><br><br><b>Custom Made Programs</b><br><b>Ages 5 to 20</b>  |    | <b>Working with Minor Hockey Associations</b><br><small>September - March</small><br><br><b>Professional Player Evaluations</b><br><b>Custom Made Skill Development Programs</b>      |
| <b>Working With Minor Hockey Coaches</b><br><small>Year Round</small><br><br><b>Tyke to Pee wee -</b><br><b>to help understand and teach "proper" hockey technical skills</b>             | <b>Working with Parents</b><br><small>Year Round</small><br><br><b>Hockey Education -</b><br><b>Direction, Guidance</b><br><b>Scouting Services/Referrals</b> | <b>Working with Individual Adult Recreational Hockey Teams</b><br><small>October - March</small><br><br><b>Power Skating</b><br><b>Player Development</b><br><b>(Mens and Ladies)</b> |

Contact  
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**244-5037**  
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[www.tuckerhockey.com](http://www.tuckerhockey.com)

(Bulletin Board)

## Adult Hockey Philosophy

*"Would you believe I discovered the fountain of youth? To my surprise it was frozen and had a net on each end."*

## Minor Hockey Philosophy

*"A hundred years from now, it will not matter what my bank account was, or what kind of house I lived in... but the world may be a better place because I was important in the life of a child."*

- REX TUCKER** Head Instructor
- NCCP Advanced 1 Certified Coach
  - Past instructor for Hockey Alberta (coaching clinics)
  - Since 1997, in excess of 1,500 hours dedicated to teaching power skating skills
  - Taught Czech, German and Austrian players in the Czech Republic for 5 Summers
  - Conducting Tucker Hockey Power Skating Programs in Calgary year round – adult, youth, 1 on 1 coaching

## Upcoming Tucker Hockey Summer Programs

### Minor Hockey "Super Power Skating" Programs\*

|         |           |  |                          |                |       |
|---------|-----------|--|--------------------------|----------------|-------|
| Group 1 | Ages 7-10 | Monday August 23rd - Friday, August 27th     | Henry Viney Arena        | 6:30 - 7:45 pm | \$199 |
| Group 2 | Ages 9-13 | Monday, August 30th - Friday, September 3rd  | Stew Hendry Arena        | 6:30-7:45 pm   | \$199 |
| Group 3 | Ages 7-10 | Tuesday, August 31st - Friday, September 3rd | South Fish Creek Complex | 4:15 - 5:30 pm | \$149 |

\*Includes GST, Practice Jersey and Certificate of Achievement

### Adult Recreational Hockey Development Programs\*\*

Includes Technical Skills, Individual, Team Tactics and Conditioning Drills

|         |   |                   |                |       |
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| Group 1 | Monday, August 23rd - Friday, August 27th   | Henry Viney Arena | 8:00 - 9:30 pm | \$199 |
| Group 2 | Monday, August 30th - Friday, September 3rd | Stew Hendry Arena | 8:00 - 9:30 pm | \$199 |

\*\*Includes GST and Practice Jersey

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## The Key to Sports Fundamentals (cont'd.)

ing staff decided to go right back to the “root cause” to find their answer. Their practices revisited the basic fundamentals found in Bantam and Midget AA and AAAs...and they stuck to reawakening the players’ development of basic individual skills; on to basic team tactics through December, and accelerating that basic skill development back to the NHL level. And back came the confidence!

By February they had a win streak going and carried that success into the playoff rounds. Although not having the Stanley Cup to show for their efforts, *their* “Stanley Cup” was in their hearts and guts!

At Tucker Hockey, we aim to keep the passion of the game in the player. We begin with our teaching of the skills of hockey at the Basic Fundamentals levels—because they work.



### Next Issue: 2004-Fall Features:

- Letters to the Editor
- Prize Winner Announcement
- Bruce Kirby: Starting Hockey at 36!
- People at the Rink: Hockey From a Grandfather's Perspective
- Lyle Hanna: Ready Hockey Stance
- Coach Rex's Corner



### "Hats off to the Calgary Flames organization!"

**-its ownership, management, coaches, players, and staff—on a championship hockey season of first-rate entertainment!**



**The Flames and fans rocked this City! What a hockey atmosphere!**

What is your favourite Calgary Flames story from their incredible playoff run? The most interesting letter of memories will be published in the next issue of *Hockey Zones*.

### Food for Thought:

The mighty oak, so big and strong, grew from a tiny acorn and still relies on its basic taproot for sustenance and survival. The “taproot” of hockey is skating. Look for our articles on the basics of skating in upcoming issues.



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## People at the Rink—Hockey From a Mom's Perspective

*Diane Benoit-Hill, mother to 4 minor hockey players: 1 boy and 3 girls, hockey player, and Tucker Hockey adult participant. Job 1: Mother and wife to long-time minor hockey coach, Trevor Ironside; Job 2 :Entrepreneur .*

### Editor's note:

It's a common theme: Successful hockey players will gratefully acknowledge their "heartfelt appreciation and thanks" for the countless hours and tremendous support their parents have provided over the years. Dads are often the ones who are idolized by aspiring young hockey players . More often than not, however, the moms play an equally important role in preparing the kids for the games: transporting them to the local rinks, etc., and loyally and loudly cheering their kids on when the dads take over at ice level. However, Diane Benoit-Hill is quite busy having fun and collecting great hockey memories by taking things to a whole new hockey level! Great role-modelling, Diane! Here is Diane's perspective on the game...

**By Diane Benoit-Hill**

A year ago, I decided this would be the last winter I would let slide by without getting out on the ice. I "got in the game" and joined in the fun. Who cares if I only had hockey skates for one year? I wouldn't have to be the best—I would only have to know I was participating at my best. Time with my four children, good exercise, and pure enjoyment: how could I resist!

*My willingness to be involved  
has taken our relationship  
to a new level.  
I encouraged my children  
and in turn,  
now they encourage me!*

Over the season, as parents, our support would add up to 400+ ice times. Watching our children develop character through a sport that would challenge them mentally and physically was both rewarding and, at times, difficult. While supporting our children through these immensely exciting and unbelievably disappointing times, we would all grow.

Losing with dignity was one of the more important lessons we learned. We grew as individuals, and as a family. We were part of a team!

Hockey is an exhilarating game that really develops team spirit—that great feeling you get from being a part of something bigger than yourself. Our love of hockey came from the camaraderie of a team; as the old saying goes, there is no "I" in team.

While driving to the rink to start my Tucker Hockey adult program, I felt

nervous about fitting in and participating with a group of men on the ice. However, my daughter who had previously experienced playing hockey with boys, provided me with invaluable tips and encouragement—plus reinforced that "things would be okay, Mom".

Tucker Hockey helped to develop my self-confidence in both skating and puck handling. With these new skills, I will continue to mentor our children in their pursuit to be their best and to move to a new level. My time on the ice as a player and my role as a volunteer assistant coach have given me a new apprecia-



*The Benoit-Hill Hockey Family: clockwise, L-R: Kristin, 14, Midnapore Bantam Girls ; Trevor; Diane; Tegan, 10, Bow Valley Atom Boys; Alexia, 12, 7 Clubs Pee wee Girls; Robert, 11, Bow Valley Pee Wee Boys.*

tion for the effort contributed to the game by each and every team member.

Okay, Moms: Don't be shy and miss out. Let's allow our children to support us. Get on the ice and have some fun—be an active part of our children's development!

### 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

**When all else fails,  
shout the magic word...**



"It is impossible to underestimate the importance of the coach in the development of an athlete. From the youngest peewee player to the elite athlete, the coach is a pivotal character in the moral as well as the physical development of his/her charges.

The more intensive the training, the greater the opportunity for moulding the athlete's character and personal philosophy as it pertains to his/her athletic career. Elite athletes appear to cleave to their coaches as mentors, guaridans, and, in some cases, almost as surrogate parents. They are fortunate indeed if their coach is concered with their moral and intellectual development as well as their athletic training."

*(Report of the Dubin Commission of Inquiry into the Use of Drugs and Banned Practices Intended to Increase Athletic Performance, 1990)*

Tucker Hockey welcomes your comments on any articles published in *Hockey Zones*: [programs@tuckerhockey.com](mailto:programs@tuckerhockey.com). The most interesting/noteworthy letters will be considered for "Letter of the Month" and will be published in the next issue of *Hockey Zones* and will receive a Tucker Hockey prize.

**Yearly SUBSCRIPTION: \$10**  
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#### Food for Thought:

*"Over the past few years at the NHL level, power play teams have not been as effective at scoring as in previous decades."*

Any thoughts on why not?

- Are players less creative?
- Are coaches less creative?
- Are penalty killing skaters better?
- Is there less room on the ice?

Other thoughts? Opinions? TELL US!  
[programs@tuckerhockey.com](mailto:programs@tuckerhockey.com)

**We grow great by dreams...**

**Some of us let these great dreams die, but others nourish and protect them; nurse them through bad days 'til they [flourish]; bring them to the sunshine and light, which comes always to those who sincerely hope that their dreams will come true.**

*—Woodrow Wilson*

## **Tucker Hockey & The Maximum Goal Scoring Edge** *present* **A Unique Summer Hockey Development Program**

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**Levels and Times** (Female and Male)

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**Improve Hockey Skills and Conditioning in a positive/fun environment**  
**Guaranteed to improve skating skills**  
**Guaranteed to improve goal scoring kills**  
**Learn the "Secrets of Scoring" more goals**

**\$189 per player (Register by Friday, July 30th)**

Includes G.S.T. Make cheque payable to "Tucker Hockey Enterprises Ltd." or by phone with credit card.

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Family and  
Group Rates!**

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Morris Lukowich 660-3006 • Rex Tucker 244-5037**



# 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

—continued p.5

## 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**

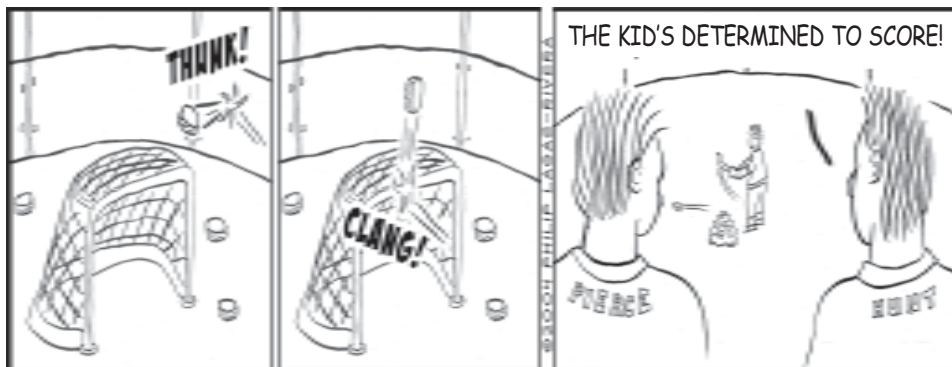
- 1: Puck Support \_\_\_\_\_
- 2: Scoring Ability \_\_\_\_\_
- 3: Play Making and Puck Movement \_\_\_\_\_
- 4: Defensive Play \_\_\_\_\_
- 5: Face Offs ( Where Applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

### **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 \_\_\_\_\_



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