



Meet The Instructor

Frank Lyall

Editor's note:
Recently, I had a good chat with Frank Lyall, Instructor for Tucker Hockey. Frank 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 Adult and Minor groups. Here is a summary of our conversation.

Frank, tell us a little about yourself and your family.

I was born in Brighton, England and came to Canada when I was 4 years old. My family lived in Ottawa all of my early life and on my own, I moved to Toronto in 1979 and from there to Edmonton in 1981. After a few different cities in Alberta, I landed in Calgary, met my wife Peggy and was married in 1987. I have 3 children, Courtney 22 (just graduated from U of C) & Ben 16 (who lives at home) and Mike 23 (at UVIC & lives in Victoria). We have two German shepherd dogs, Reigne and Skye. We are pretty much home bodies but love the outdoors and spend time during the summer at our lake property in Sylvan Lake Alberta; we ride bikes, swim, boat and spend fun times around the campfire in the evenings.

What types of sports do you, your wife and your children participate in?

I am a lover of all sports and grew up in a racket sport family. Squash, badminton and tennis were the top ones. My immediate family are big basketball fans and have spent the last 20 plus years either playing coaching or just being "family fans".

How did you get into the sport of Hockey?

I started playing hockey on the outdoor rink but didn't really

start organized hockey until I was 20... late when I joined a novice men's league.

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

Sometime around 2000 or 2001... Dave Mahoney (a head instructor now with Tucker Hockey), who I have been a teammate with since early 1986; thought we could improve our hockey skills and Dave convinced me and a few of our teammates to join a Tucker Hockey Adult Program. Around 2009 Dave because of my familiarity with the Tucker Hockey way and programs... as well as my coaching background in basketball... David thought I would make a good instructor... so I have been helping out with Tucker Hockey programs for nearly 5 years now.

What is the most enjoyable part of coaching/teaching for you?

I have coached different sports for many years (badminton, squash and basketball) and enjoy the challenge of seeing an athlete get better and recognize their potential. I love the challenge of finding ways to inspire and gently nudge athletes to gain confidence and forever love the sport they endeavor to learn.

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

Constant, life-long learning isn't a chore but a privilege. We live in a great country, with so much opportunity and we often don't realize how so many don't have the chance to partake in sports and to give back and help others.

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

~ Henry Adams

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What is the most enjoyable part of on ice instructing for you?

I love to be totally involved so it is as rewarding as possible for every participant. I love to see them “get it” and realize you can do anything, if you try. There is no “can’t” only “won’t”!

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

Trying to look at every participant and how they view the experience and then develop a way to communicate the “how” so that each participant can “get it” - and also to keep up with my skill level. I find I cheat and don’t work on the basics as much...instructing grounds me!

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

Skating is a skill/talent that you can do for life! Even if you don’t play hockey you can still skate and maybe instruct. To feel the cool wind you create in your face as you glide around on the frozen surface...wow – for me so cool so very cool!

I see skating as the “seed” that creates real talent. Many hockey participants can shoot; pass, even check but the most talented are great skaters. Put all the skills together after learning to really master skating....you will have hockey greatness!

Any other tips would you pass on to coaches who participate in hockey?

Win with class – lose with dignity. Have integrity in all things you do as a coach. It’s not about you but everyone else, players, parents, family and fans. It has been said before many times but some don’t hear it. Look at situations from many angles to get a real perspective. Sometimes you really can’t see the forest for the trees until you’re in the forest.

Do you have any funny anecdotes to share with regards to your experience instructing?

I went to a Calgary Hitmen game and in the pre-game warm up one of the players forgot to take off his skate guards and when he stepped on the ice – whoosh – down he goes and all the fans watched as he picked himself up and dusted himself off and laughed it off. I thought to myself “how could you forget your guards?!” – then not 2 days later I did the exact same thing and it must have been great comedy because I laughed so hard at myself that many participants originally concerned that I might have been hurt started laughing with me. The “Hockey Gods” have a sense of humor and long memories!!

What’s the best part about hockey for you?

This is a tough question because I love hockey so much. I believe it is the greatest game in the world. The amount of talent you must have to be elite is incredible and I am amazed and marvel when I see a truly gifted athlete who proves that.

I love the camaraderie of my fellow teammates and the laughs we have together. The friendships that I have developed over the many years I have played. The true sweetness to making a pass and seeing it succeed, receiving a great pass, making that perfect shot, wow – let me die with my skates on and there better be a rink in heaven!

What other things interest you, outside hockey?

I truly am 90% a hockey fanatic. I love many sports but hockey is my life! If I could play all day and all night I would. The mind is certainly willing.....the body well not so much.

I have coached basketball for over 25 years, both boys and girls (from 5 year olds to High School and Elite Men’s level) and continue to coach, and I enjoy that immensely.

I love bird watching and relaxing on my deck, especially at Sylvan Lake in the summer.

I especially enjoy my children and the interesting wonderful people they have grown up to become. They impress me everyday.

What does the future hold for Frank?

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Plan to continue what I am doing now. I play men's hockey league with some old buddies once a week in the winter and a pick up once a week with some other old buddies year round.

I sure hope to be skating/playing hockey until I am 80! And especially instructing with Coach Rex and Coach Dave! I enjoy making a "difference" on the ice with Tucker Hockey. I look forward having grandchildren some day and to teaching them what I have learned at Tucker Hockey.

Editor's note:

Thanks Frank for taking the time from your busy family and work schedule to complete a Tucker Hockey Instructor

Profile. Having spent many hours on the ice with Coach Frank, the following personal traits come to mind. Frank projects a very appreciative and positive view on life. A good kindred spirit! He is a very personable guy and works really well 1 on 1 with on ice participants. With his strong people, communication and transferable teaching knowledge and skills from other sports such as basketball, Frank excels helping the lower skilled Adult and Minor skaters get to another level. Over the past few years Coach David and I have enjoyed mentoring Frank to the role of a strong assistant on ice instructor. Frank, my friend, I have valued your contributions to Tucker Hockey...much appreciated! I look forward to many fun times on the ice in the years ahead. Yes, hope to be skating until I am 80 as well! Love your snap shot demo...it's true sweetness on ice!
