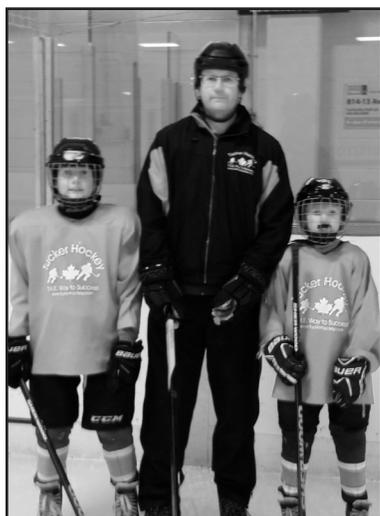


# Meet the Instructor

## Paul Riley



**Paul with his two sons:  
Griffin & Sullivan**

### Editor's note:

*Recently, I had a good chat with Paul Riley, Instructor for Tucker Hockey. Paul has been a valuable member of the Tucker Hockey team for more than 2 years now. He has helped primarily with teaching power skating and hockey skills to various Spring and Summer Minor groups as well as assist on occasions with our Adult 101 program. Here is a summary of our conversation.*

When I was 6 years old, my Dad signed me up for hockey. Hockey, in the early 1970's was much different than today. There were not as many ice times, and early morning practices before school. My Dad was a big hockey fan so that's why I think we were put in hockey and not other sports. Winters were long and cold in our small town, but hockey made it seem like the most fun season of all. I played hockey in Belleville, Ontario from 6 to 18 years of age. The best years were when I played midget hockey. It was fast paced and brought out my competitive side. It was a lot of fun. I found at that level of hockey, the game did not build character anymore, it revealed it. I made some great friendships. I still play hockey with my linemate from midget hockey today. He runs the league we play in and we call him "The Commissioner". Together, we even made our own "Stanley Cup" for our league.

### **What is your coaching background?**

I have been coaching minor hockey for 8 years - Timbits for 4 years, Novice for 3 years and Atom for 1 year. I completed the Hockey Canada Coach Development and Safety programs. I have really enjoyed following and helping my boys in hockey. The last 2 or more years I have enjoyed learning more about power skating and the technical part of the game being with Tucker Hockey.

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

About 3 years ago, I met Coach Rex. He had been hired by our minor hockey association to run some power skating practices for our team. I was coaching first year novice hockey and I found Coach Rex's approach to skating inspiring. I had registered my oldest son in Tucker Hockey prior to meeting Rex and I was pleased with the results.

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

I feel that skating properly is the most important skill to master if you want to be a better hockey player. Rex and I

### **Tell us about yourself and your family**

I am married to a beautiful lady, Karen and we have 2 boys, Griffin and Sullivan who have been the focus of our lives for the last 10 years now. It is amazing how time seems to fly! I studied chemistry at university and after obtaining my degree, I worked in the industry for about 10 years. Karen and I decided to start a small company making custom cabinets in 1993 and we still run it today. Our family is very involved in sports, with both boys playing hockey and soccer. I help coach each of the boy's teams in both of the sports. Although it is very time consuming I enjoy it immensely.

### **What sports do you participate in?**

I still play hockey whenever I can, but it is difficult to do because I love watching my kids play and practice sports. The boys both play hockey and soccer but they also like tennis, basketball, baseball and football. I am glad to see them try different sports and activities. I think that it is important that they try many different things as young athletes. I do not agree with one sport training for children.

### **How did you get into the sport of Hockey?**

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got along well at the practices and he liked my approach to coaching the kids. He asked if I would like to become involved with Tucker Hockey and I am glad that I did! Not just showing people how to do things, but encouraging them in a positive and non-threatening way can yield amazing results. Different players have many different skill levels but they all have the same ability to smile. Bringing out the true joy from learning hockey is what we should all strive for. Happy athletes perform much better!

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

Bonding with people and helping them to get better and learning new skills is a great thing. I get to see the progress that they make. Teaching the children to be brave and to try difficult skating techniques, regardless of the result on the first of many attempts, but trusting you when you say “You can do it”, or “I know you can” and then watching them achieve that goal is amazing!

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

The biggest challenge can be getting a child that may be nervous or uncertain to feel included and comfortable enough to give you their best and most focused effort. Once they trust and respect you, players will give you their all and you just have to be genuine and honest when making that connection. If the teacher is not having fun teaching then the students won't have fun learning.

## **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 the most important skill in hockey. With proper instruction students can achieve a high level of skating competence. This will create a very confident athlete, that when playing hockey, focuses on play making and positioning, confident in their ability to be able to skate to any position with ease. This can only be achieved through proper instruction, with practice and repetition to make it second nature. It is truly amazing to watch great skaters in action!

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

It's a game with many highs and lows and being a true champion is not defined by a number on the score board but by the amount of heart you put in the game and the praise you receive from your peers. Even if the whole game is not a great one, it can still have great moments.

## **What other things interest you, outside hockey?**

Our family likes to go camping in our spare time. The boys love fishing and bike riding. We also like a good movie with a big bowl of popcorn at home on the sofa.

## **What does the future hold for Paul?**

My plan is to continue to watch my boys grow up playing sports and having fun. I enjoy coaching and I hope to be a part of many teams in the years to come. Maybe even retire soon!

## **Editor's note:**

*Thanks Paul for taking the time from your busy family and work schedule to complete a Tucker Hockey Instructor Profile. After conducting a power skating session for Coach Paul's Novice team, I discovered Paul had great passion and love for the game of hockey. I was impressed with his fun loving approach with the kids and the positive team learning environment that he had created. This was refreshing to see in the minor hockey system. Maybe the reason he relates and connects so well with his players is because he's a big kid at heart himself! Paul projects a very appreciative and positive view on life. He is a very approachable coach and works really well on a 1 on 1 basis with participants in our Tucker Hockey programs. With his strong people and communication skills, Paul excels helping the younger age skaters get to the next level. Over the past few years Coach David and I have enjoyed mentoring Paul to the role of a strong assistant on ice instructor. Paul has shown a strong interest to learn more about the technical part of the game especially skating. He has a bright future in the coaching fraternity. Paul my friend, I have valued your contributions to Tucker Hockey...much appreciated! I look forward to many more "fun times" on the ice in the years ahead.*