



Meet The Instructor

Ronald Wong

*Editor's note:
Recently, I had a good chat with Ron Wong, Instructor for Tucker Hockey. Ron 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.

Ron, tell us a bit about yourself and your family.

I am a native Calgarian, married for 22 years to my wife, Janice, and we have two teenagers: Tiana (15 years old) and Matthew (13 years old). I'm a mild mannered mechanical engineer by day for a natural gas pipeline company and an assistant power skating instructor, ringette coach, hockey coach by night.

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

While growing up, I did not participate in very many sports other than what was required for Phys. Ed. When I met my wife, Janice, she was growing up in a tennis family, so naturally, my tennis skills improved as we dated. We've put our kids through tennis lessons so that we can play together as a family on the court. Janice is the runner in our family and has been running for about ten years (running a marathon at 40 years old and several half marathons since then). Tiana has been playing ringette for five years and Matthew has been playing hockey for two years.

What is your hockey background?

My hockey background did not start until just before I graduated from university in 1987 and I would best describe it as "uneducated". I did not grow up playing in minor hockey. I still remember my first ice time with a church youth group back then. I had borrowed different equipment

from different friends, substituted hockey shin pads with soccer shin pads, and I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I bought oversized Lange plastic molded hockey skates at Canadian Tire. My friend helped me purchase my first hockey stick (Titan TPM1020, \$25) at Ribtor Sporting Goods. I remember cutting the hockey stick to fit in the trunk of my car instead of cutting it to suit me (It so happens to be the right length; about an inch or so below the chin). Since then over the span of 25 years, I've been regularly playing recreational hockey.

How has hockey influenced your life?

That is a very good question and I'm realizing hockey has been a greater influence in my life than I perceived. Since that first ice time, I've been hooked on playing hockey and building hockey friendships. When my wife and I moved to Edmonton shortly after we married during the early 90's, it didn't take long to find new hockey friends. At that time, I had also bought a whole set of equipment for my wife to convince her to give it a try. She was a very good sport about it and had a great time. When we moved back to Calgary in 1995, we started our family, and as the kids grew up, there was no second thought to sign them up for skating lessons which developed an excellent foundation for them before they moved on to ringette and hockey. For a several winters, I would set up a backyard rink to give them more ice time, but I think I used it more than they did. Since the kids have been in ringette and hockey, I've been helping out as an assistant coach for both kids' teams. I enjoy being on the ice with the kids (and their team mates) as well as meeting people in the ringette and hockey community. In December 2010, my wife called upon those communities to vote for me to be one of three first skaters for the grand opening of three new ice rinks at the Athletic and Ice Complex at Canada Olympic Park. The voting was successful enough to allow me the privilege of skating and passing the puck around with elite hockey player and Olympic gold medalist, Hayley Wickenheiser. That experience was not possible if it weren't for the covert effort by my wife to secretly nominate me and rally votes.

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If you would thoroughly know anything, teach it to others.

~Tryon Edwards

Ron Wong (Cont'd from 7)

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

My initial involvement with Tucker Hockey was as a participant. I first heard about Tucker Hockey from a friend who was also a participant back in 2001. I had been looking for power skating lessons for adults like me who had started hockey at an older age. At that time, it seemed the only power skating lessons available were for minor hockey age groups. Tucker Hockey was a great fit for my demographic. Rex was still tweaking his programs at that time and his youthful exuberance was doing us in. I remember my first session for

the Level 1.0 adult program started with eight skaters and finished with five because the backs of the other three skaters had given out. Rex has steadily mellowed since then. From 2001 to 2006, I was a repeat participant in the Level 1.0 and Level 1.5 adult programs. I cannot emphasize enough about how extremely valuable the ice time was to develop proper technique, edge control, and other hockey skills which allowed me to enjoy playing hockey more than ever. In 2007, Rex asked me to help as an assistant instructor for a Level 1.0 program and that was truly an honour

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Ron Wong (Cont'd from 33)

especially when I donned the Tucker Hockey track suit. Never had I imagined that I would be doing that some day. Since then, my focus has been on the Level 1.0 (now Level 101) program for adults as a head / assistant instructor alongside Rex and his other instructors.

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

Instructing with Tucker Hockey has taught me the importance of communication, attention to detail, and believing that improvement can happen at any skill level and at any age. I want to thank the Tucker Hockey instructors and especially Rex for teaching me the many facets of on-ice instruction. I greatly appreciate Rex's mentorship and patience.

What is the most enjoyable part of instructing for you?

The most enjoyable part of instructing is being in an environment where everyone has the same objective and determination to become a better skater. I enjoy "paying it forward" to those in the Level 1.0 adult program who are discovering the Tucker Hockey program because I have been through the same program and I absolutely believe in it. I get tremendous satisfaction in finding the right instruction to help a participant with their skating, seeing immediate results, and seeing their reaction as well.

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

The challenge I've experienced as an on-ice instructor would be trying to remember all the key teaching points for the power skating program(s) because there is a lot of information to convey to the participants in a limited amount of time. Another challenge from me would be to manage the on-ice time to allow for water breaks as Rex has reminded me after that one time.

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

Skating is the most important skill to have as a foundation or as a launching point into hockey or ringette. That is why it is important to learn this skill through proper instruction as early as possible. For most skating skills, every person has a strong side and a weak side. For example, strong at skating forwards and weak at skating backwards or strong at turning one direction and weak at turning the opposite direction. Proper skating instruction will strengthen a

skater's weaknesses and build confidence. Once the skating skill becomes a strong foundation, it will be one less thing to think about when developing hockey skills such as puck handling or shooting.

What other things interest you, outside of hockey?

I enjoy spending time with my wife and kids, travelling, and tennis when outside of hockey.

What does the future hold for Ron Wong?

Hopefully, continued hockey skills development for myself, continued coaching with my kids' hockey and ringette, and to continue as an on-ice instructor at Tucker Hockey.

Thanks Rex!

Editor's note:

Thanks Ron 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 Ron, the following personal traits come to mind. Ron is a very conscientious individual and gentle soul, who demonstrates great attention to details and relates extremely well to his on ice audience. Since Ron has participated numerous times in the Tucker Hockey Adult Programs over the past 10 years as a player, he is very knowledgeable about the Tucker hockey – on ice philosophy, curriculum, practice plans, drills and many of the teaching points. With his strong communication skills and empathetic ways, he excels teaching the lower skilled Adult participants! Over the past couple years I have enjoyed mentoring Ron to the role of a strong assistant instructor and now to a very competent head instructor for the Adult Level 101 Program. Ron, 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!



Ron at COP with Olympic Heroes Christine Nesbitt, Elvis Stojko, and Hayley Wickenheiser.