



Elite Development Team Description

Our teams are designed to help players build hockey skills through extra ice time and coaching. While team strategy is important, the focal point of this program team is to build skilled hockey players who will be able to compete at a high level when they reach the 14u and 16u age groups. We will be using USA hockey's ADM and long term athlete development model as a guideline to accomplish this. The Pond Elite Development Teams will be practicing one day a week for roughly 80 minutes. Their practices will be split up into segments of specific hockey skill development and team strategy. The Pond Development players will be **encouraged** to play in their local house league (at a level the director and coaches feel is appropriate for each individual player's development) and are **encouraged** to participate in other Pond programs (will receive discount). These programs are:

Hockey Academy: 1-1.5 hours on-ice, coached practice for all levels. In short, this is an ongoing skill building camp run by the Pond coaching staff. Hundreds of repetitions focused on mastery of skating, stick handling, passing and shooting...

4 on 4 League: Fast paced, full-ice game between players of all levels. Players are encouraged to take risks, try new skills and battle with other local players. Players can choose to play up in age division if they want to test their abilities against stronger, faster hockey players. This is a "favorite" among our young players!

Girl Power: Exactly the same as Hockey Academy, but no boys allowed!

Pond Time: Open "Stick and Puck" sessions. Players will have the opportunity to work on coach recommended skills. They can also meet their friends and teammates to play small area games on the ice.

The Pond Elite Development team practices will be scheduled so that players can participate in these other programs. Additionally, Development team coaches will typically be on site during other programming (most will be coaching Hockey Academy) and will be able to offer additional feedback to players. **This is the program for you if you want up to 5 hours of coaching a week. This is the program for you if you want to be on the ice between 6-10 hours a week (up to 6 hours possible every weekend) in a wide variety of programming, at a really fun local hockey training facility.** We believe that time on task, deep practice, and master coaching, mixed with a large dose of fun unstructured play, builds strong, skillful and passionate hockey players.



Roles and Responsibilities

Coaches: The coaches' primary responsibility is developing these young players. The coaches will be in charge of ALL on ice training in addition to off-ice hockey related skills (synthetic and skate mill). Head coaches will determine playing time, positioning and appropriate leveling. Coaches will evaluate sportsmanship, behavior and leadership skills as it pertains to being a part of a team. Playing decisions can be based on these character traits.

Team Manager: The team manager will serve as the communication liaison between the coaches and the parents. The manager will update parents on practice schedules, events and any other important information needed throughout the year. The team manager will complete all paperwork needed to enter the tournaments. The team manager will NOT be in charge of any items that fall under the coaches' umbrella (ie levels in tournaments, tournament selections, playing time, player dismissal).

Tournament Manager: The tournament manager will help organize the hotel reservations and any team outings during the tournaments.

Fundraising Manager: The Fundraising manager will help present fundraising tools for individual players to raise funds towards their hockey season.

Tournaments

At this point our tentative tournament schedule includes the Dallas Stars Tournament Series, which is held on Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and MLK weekend. We are also going to be participating in a wild card tournament in Dallas or out of state (potentially The One Hockey Tournament, Las Vegas Annual Presidents Day Tournament, or something else suitable). While we do our best to determine tournaments pre season, we cannot 100% guarantee these will be the specific tournaments we attend. Non parent coaches will be fully reimbursed for their travel and hotel expenses.



Season

August 18-21	Pre Season Camp (training)
August 22	Kick Off Party
August 22- February 20	Season
September 26-28	Power Skating Clinic (Robby Glantz)

Tentative Tournaments

Labor Day	Dallas
October or November	Houston/Dallas
MLK	Dallas
Presidents Day	Wild Card (Las Vegas/Dallas)



Pond Hockey Club Hockey Programs 2014-2015 (All Pond Elite Players Eligible for these Programs)

Program Descriptions

Pond Time (Every Day) Pond Elite players **skate for free**, have access to Pond coaches, and can work on their homework assignments for building individual skills

Hockey Academy (Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays) Intense, station-based skills practice and small area games with 15-20 minutes of group power skating. Kids grouped according to ability. Pond Elite Coaches run this Academy. Coaches are Pond staff members and paid, non-parent assistants. Focus is on building individual skills.
20% Discount for Pond Elite Players

10 & Under 3 on 3 (Wednesdays) Half-ice and cross-ice 3 on 3 games. Focus is on unstructured play to foster experimentation, creativity, social interaction and the opportunity to compete against each other without adults and coaches imposing their views on the game. Many kids report this as their favorite hockey session of the week.
20% Discount for Pond Elite Players

11 & Up 4 on 4 (Wednesdays) Full ice, wide open 4 on 4 games, similar in spirit and format to the younger 3 on 3. Focus is on speed, creativity, and unstructured play. This is a great opportunity for kids and teenagers to battle with the most highly skilled players in our programs. Almost all of the kids report this as their favorite night of the week at The Pond. **20% Discount for Pond Elite Players**

Pond Elite Practice (Fridays) This is the weekly 80-90 minute practice for the Pond Elite Teams. The focus of these practices will be individual skill development, following a season long plan for progression. Elements of team strategy and game play will be sprinkled in here as well. Players will receive their weekly homework assignments and Pond Time assignments.

House Practice (Mondays and Tuesdays) Squirts are at The Pond on Tuesdays. Pee Wees will be at Chap on Mondays. Focus is on a station based, skill building practice. Coaches are former players and dedicated volunteers, directed by Chaparral's recreational program.

House Games (Saturdays) Fun, full ice games at The Pond and Chaparral ice. This is a great opportunity to be a leader and teammate on the ice. This is also a great opportunity to use your skills in a game setting.

All of the above programs are listed on the 2014-2015 Hockey Season schedule attached (see next page). **Your player could skate as little as a few hours/week, or as many as 18.5 hours/week!**



All Sample Programs Below include the Free Training Camp August 18-21
Basic Program (5 hours/week total) \$650 for season

Pond Elite Practice

Pond Time a couple days per week to work on homework and skills

Basic+ Program (6 hours/week) \$1010 for season

Pond Elite Practice

Pond Time a couple days per week to work on homework and skills

3 on 3 or 4 on 4 (12 or 24 sessions available)

Basic and House Program (7 hours/week) roughly \$1400 for full season

Pond Elite Practice

Pond Time a couple days per week to work on homework and skills

2 House Sessions per week

Hardcore Pond Elite Program (10 hours/week) roughly \$1800 for season

Pond Elite Practice

Pond Time 3 days per week to work on homework and skills

2 House Sessions per week

Hockey Academy (one day per week)

Hardcore Pond "Russian" Program (16.5 hours/week) roughly \$2460 for season

Pond Elite Practice

Pond Time 5 days per week to work on homework and skills

2 House Sessions per week

Hockey Academy (one day per week)

3 on 3 or 4 on 4

Weekend Shiny

This is a "SAMPLE"- you can customize your own schedule.



Pond Elite Development Team Sample Menu

(Hockey development programs available for your kids next hockey season at The Pond)

Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays	Saturdays	Sundays
Pond Time	Pond Time	Pond Time	Pond Time	Pond Time	Squirt House Games	Hockey Academy
Hockey	Hockey	3 on3		Pond Elite Team Practice		
Academy (Squirts)	Academy (Pee Wees)	4 on 4			Pee Wee House Games	Pond Time
PW House Practice	Squirt House Practice				Pond Time	11 and Up Shinny
					11 and Up Shinny	10 and Under Shinny
					10 and Under Shinny	

Educational Material

The following materials support The Pond's philosophy on:

1. Why we strongly recommend House League participation
2. Why we feel your resources, time and money should be invested in practice vs. formal competition.
3. Our coaching philosophy with regard to winning and systems vs. building individual skill.



Why House Hockey for the Elite Development Players?

The single most frequently asked question we are receiving at The Pond regarding our Elite Development Teams is **“Why do you want these elite players to play house hockey next year?”**

Here is our answer:

The house leagues are improving next year with just a few adjustments:

We are looking to place kids in the appropriate division based on **skill** and **experience**, rather than just age this next season. Directors at Chap and the Pond are currently coming up with criteria for placing kids up a division or down a division in the most objective way possible.

For games, we will be trying a new experiment this year where opposing coaches are encouraged to work together in putting out their “first line” and a “second line” at the same time. The more experienced kids will be on the ice at the same time, and the less experienced kids will be on the ice at the same time. Players who are “tweeners” can float back and forth between the first line and second line to get experience playing at both levels. Many youth basketball and volleyball organizations are run in a similar fashion to promote more touches, fun, and healthy competition.

The variety of coaches is a good thing (the glass is half-full):

Families can request to have (or not have) a certain coach, and directors can respect their request whenever possible.

Some coaches may have personalities that don’t jive with you or your kids for whatever reason. That is completely understandable. Not all coaches are equal in every way. Some have great soft skills, but lack the hard skills. Some have more hard skills, but lack the soft skills. Players respond better to certain skillsets than others when it comes to coaches and vice versa! The beauty of the “house system” for practices is that our kids get to interact with **all of the coaches** in a meaningful way through the USA Hockey ADM-style station-based practices. We have coaches in our house leagues who are current players for the Texas Stars, former NHL/AHL players and pros, and coaches who played at a high level in college, juniors and high school. We also have caring moms and dads who volunteer their time to help out on the ice. Thanks to USA Hockey, and Angie Vaught, they are all certified, and are required to enroll in

continuing education. **Most** youth sports **do not** have this important requirement. They all have access to the same curriculum and pedagogy, which is extremely beneficial to our youth hockey players.

Your kids get to work with all of these coaches and their strengths in every ADM, station-based practice. In one short practice your kid gets to skate with and learn from coaches like Jeff Kungle (former pro), Adrian Harthorn (former WHL player), and Ben Anderson (a volunteer dad that makes coming to the rink really fun for the kids).

And for those of you who are unhappy about your coach... there is a lot of value in spending an entire season on a team where your kid may not be so fired up about his coach. In real life, your kid will have plenty of teachers, teammates, supervisors, bosses, or in-laws that he does not particularly like. Getting some experience in learning how to make the best of these situations goes a long way in producing kids that are resilient and “anti-fragile.” **Are we raising a bunch of princesses or pioneers?** Princesses get everything and every situation just the way they (and their parents) want it. Pioneers learn to overcome, adapt, grow, and persist, and get stronger and stronger because of it.

Building talented young players is a function of ice time and coaching: That’s it. While tournaments are fun, and offer an opportunity for your kid to test his or her skills against other talented players, talent is developed by **a lot of practice**. If the idea is to truly develop your child as a hockey player, then he or she needs to get on the **ice for hours and play**. By playing in the local house leagues, in addition to any other local programs like Hockey Academy, these players allow themselves to broaden their skill set and playing experience.

At the older divisions of the Pond Elite Teams (PW and Bantam), playing house means 2 extra sessions every week on a full sheet of ice. Players will get 16-20 extra full-ice games (in addition to the 10-15 full-ice games with their Elite Team). They will also get 20-22 extra practices on a full sheet of ice. This is important for player development with regard to pushing top end speed, familiarizing with the angles and extra real estate, and the conditioning required on a full sheet of ice.

Just because your kid is good enough to make one of the Pond Elite Development teams, does not mean he or she will be a star, leader, or even a big contributor on that team: These Pond Elite Development teams have a lot of the very top players at each age division already committed. The funnel gets tighter and tighter as you go up in playing levels. That’s how the math works.

By playing in the house league your kid will get to touch the puck more, and play on the power play and penalty kill. More important than any of that, as a

Pond Elite player participating in the house league, your kid will get a chance to be a **leader** on his or her house team. Knowing what it means to lead and help his/her teammates is more important than scoring a bunch of goals in their next “select” tournament.

House Leagues build community and are good for local rinks:

By participating in the house leagues, the Pond Elite players make new friends from all over the city. Many consider it a downside that we only have a couple rinks in Austin, and not one in every subdivision of the city. That’s the reality of our current market supply and the demand for hockey in Central Texas. The upside is that very few players and families are from the same neighborhood or school. People come from all over. This is good for the parents and the kids to build relationships with those who we may not get the chance to meet otherwise.

This “house” question also ties in with another question we get all the time at The Pond about when we are going to build a full sheet of ice next door. The answer: not until we have proven, robust, active, sustainable youth and adult house leagues that support local hockey initiatives. Pulling all the talented players out of the local house leagues to be on “select” teams is bad for business, especially if they don’t participate in other weekend programs here in Austin. Encouraging our Pond Elite players to participate in local programs, like the house league, is good for all the rinks in town. This may even sound crass and selfish, but we are not ashamed or bashful about this.

Players who stick around on weekends to get 5-6 hours of ice time here in Austin... put money in back into our business that we can reinvest in more ice. From what we have seen in our short existence, those players who are playing on the weekends for 5-6 hours of ice time are also turning out to be the best players in every age division!



Practice vs Games

One of the biggest issues surrounding the development of hockey players is the number of practices they have compared to the number of games they play. An ideal, realistic ratio is 2 practices for every 1 game played for ages 7 – 13.

While some associations have no problem in meeting the recommended ratio, others have great difficulty in finding enough ice time meet this practice to game ratio.

Are games really necessary, or all they are cracked up to be? Not when you look at the stats below, especially if you are trying to develop skills.

A Game By The Numbers

- Players will have the puck on their stick for an average of **8 seconds per game**.
- Players will take an average of **1 - 2 shots** per game.
- **99% of the feedback coaches give players is when they have the puck. Ironically, players only have the puck on their stick for 0.2% of the game.**
- **1 efficient** practice will give a player more skill development than **11** games collectively.

If you look at these stats, how can we expect kids to develop when they are playing more games than practicing? Studies show that the better kids are at something, the more they will enjoy it, and the longer they will play. Many kids quit hockey because they get to the level where they can't compete due to lack of skill – therefore it is no longer fun.

At the ages of 5 – 6 or 5 – 7, the practice to game ratio should be even higher (6: 1) and realistically there is no need for formal games.

“ I think 2 to 1 or 3 to 1 practice to games is the way to go. In practice, that's where you become a better hockey player. You get to have the puck on your stick more, and take more shots on net than in any game. Even as a professional you don't have the puck on your stick that much, and at a young age it's crucial to develop your skills, you can't do that in an organized game.”

Paul Kariya – Canadian Men's Olympic Team

For more information regarding skill development, practice planning or drills, please refer to the Initiation Program, or Hockey Canada Skills Program information.

MORE PRACTICE OR MORE PLAY?

Youth hockey now involves more games and tournaments than ever. Where the season used to start in October and end in March, it now goes almost non-stop for twelve months. Spring and summer seasons, which used to be dedicated to skill development programs, are now dedicated to tryouts, practices and tournaments.

Children need to have fun! They need some time away from hockey, away from the rink. They don't thrive on the constant pressure of tournaments and competition; they should play other sports and develop other athletic skills that will improve their spirit and over-all coordination. The fact is that North America is producing inadequately skilled players, many of whom burn out before they peak!

In my opinion (and in the opinion of many hockey experts), the off-season should be used for skill development! If kids want to skate on those beautiful summer they should be doing so for skill development purposes rather than for competition!

Despite all the hockey schools and camps that have proliferated to extraordinary numbers, we are producing less skilled players. Why? Either the schools are failing to provide the skill development that they profess to provide, or fewer kids are attending the skill development programs.

An excellent series of articles, entitled "A Game in Crisis", and written by William Houston (1998), for the Toronto Globe and Mail, explored this issue. Although these articles are specific to the status of hockey in Canada, the problems with hockey in the US are almost identical. I'd like to quote from two of these articles.

"...Leading hockey figures say the game is in a crisis. Canada is a diminished force in international and professional hockey not as a result of advances made in Europe and the United States, but because the country no longer produces its own highly skilled players. Canadian youth hockey, which has a rich history of developing the game's stars, has become a wasteland for children who have been denied proper training.

Canada still sends more players to the National Hockey League than any country, but most of them are second or third- line performers -- checkers and role players, the "unskilled labour of the NHL," a former Hockey Canada head Derek Holmes calls them. The top talent, with the occasional exception, now comes from Europe."

"All the good kids, in terms of skill, are in Europe," said Paul Henry, noted scout and director of player development for the NHL's Florida Panthers. "It's just so clear cut."

Howie Meeker, a former player, coach and commentator, said: "We Canadians say, 'Hey, it's our game and we're better than everybody else.' But, in fact, every year we're slipping further and further behind."

"As recently as 12 years ago, Canadian players dominated all aspects of NHL scoring. Canadians still make up 61 per cent of the league, compared with the Europeans' 20 per cent. Yet it is European players who, for the most part, lead in offensive statistics."

"When 20 per cent of the players in the NHL are European and the best 10 per cent of the scorers are also European, that should be a wake-up call," said Ron Dussiaume, a former professional player and a master course conductor with Canada's national coaching certification program."

Glen Sather, currently the General Manager of the New York Rangers, noticed a distinct talent drop-off when he selected the 1996 World Cup team. "When we were picking defencemen, Rob Blake and Al MacInnis were hurt," Sather said. So we had to use other guys and they just didn't have the skill to play at that level."

Critics place the blame for Canada's decline at all three levels -- professional, junior and youth. Junior hockey is a business in which revenue and winning games take precedence over developing players. Professional hockey emphasizes size and aggressiveness. Minor hockey, taking its lead from the pros, does the same, placing size and strength ahead of skill and creativity, even for eight-year-olds.

While children in Europe learn fundamentals from hours of practice and are taught by trained coaches, Canadian kids are thrown into games, as many as 140 in a season. Youth hockey

coaches are often inexperienced volunteers.

For parents who dream of their children becoming hockey stars, winning games is more important than learning skills and developing creativity. "They're robots," said Marty Williamson, who coaches a Tier 2 junior team in Milton, Ont. "The creativity isn't in the game and maybe the fun isn't there, either. At the age of 13, the dropout rate skyrockets."

John Neville, who has coached in minor hockey for 24 years, said: "We're not producing skilled players. We've got a system that's very broken."

Canadian players who advance to the NHL do so in spite of the system, not because of it, critics say. And even those who are good enough to play in the NHL still can't match the Europeans in skill because they weren't adequately taught as children. "We're sending players to the NHL, but we're not developing great players," said Peter Martin, the head of the Hamilton minor hockey association. "The elite players are advancing, but they would advance anyway. What about all the others?" Neville and other coaches say minor hockey's obsession with winning is the most destructive element of the Canadian youth system. Moreover, it is one of the fundamental reasons the country is no longer producing top-level talent.

"Canadian children play in an environment that stresses winning over developing skills.

Coaches, desperate for victory, use only their best players in key games. They teach defense and intimidation rather than offence and creativity. Children as young as 6 participate in twice as many games as practices. They fall well short of the 3-to-1 practice-to-game ratio recommended Hockey Canada. In the old days, Canadian children learned fundamentals on rinks and ponds away from organized hockey. But in today's game-oriented system, there is no place for unstructured activity, and the practice time children receive is inadequate."

"If you're going to be skilled in anything, you must practice," said Ron Dussiaume, a former professional player who conducts master courses in Canada's national coaching certification program. "If your son or daughter wants to take music lessons, what you do as parents is to make sure they commit to practicing an hour a day to make it happen. We don't apply that to hockey. The lack of practice hurts us terribly."

The European system takes the other route. It places an emphasis on learning skills. While Canadians five and six years old play a 20-game schedule, children in Europe won't start playing games until they are 7. At earlier ages, they are taught to skate, pass and handle the puck.

In Canada, children 10 years old are already playing as many as 140 games in a season. In a game, even the best players handle the puck on average for about 45 seconds. In a well-structured 50-minute practice, a child will be working with the puck almost constantly.

In Europe, children play no more than 30 games and participate in more than 100 practices. They are taught by professional coaches. Skills are learned in high-tempo practices that incorporate game conditions.

"When you spend nine or 10 years as a child under those conditions, you can play like Jaromir Jagr," said Dussiaume, who has developed a minor hockey practice curriculum that incorporates European techniques.

Few, if any, Canadians play at the level of Jagr, (he helped lead the Czech Republic to a gold medal at the Nagano Olympics). Statistics show that Europeans lead the National Hockey League in most offensive categories."

The effectiveness of European training became clear to Paul Henry, while he was watching a team practice earlier this season in Djurgarden, Sweden. "They practice twice a day," Henry said. "In the morning, they work on nothing but skills for an hour and a half. It's all skill development. When I left the arena, I realized why European kids are better than our kids."

Perhaps it would be wise for parents and aspiring hockey players to evaluate their long-term goals before deciding the best way to dedicate their "hockey time" this coming summer.

SKATE GREAT HOCKEY, LAURA STAMM

Copyright, May, 2003

Coaching to Win Versus Coaching to Develop Skills: What should you be looking for in a Hockey Coach?

Due to league imposed practice to game ratios, North American coaches at all levels are forced to choose between teaching players individual skills development or teaching them team systems – known as the “Coaching to Win” versus the “Coaching to Develop Skills” dilemma.

A coach who is “coaching to win”, focuses on team systems like breakouts, forechecking, neutral zone positioning, power plays, man-down, etc. The coach assesses the ability of his athletes and then uses his players like chess pieces in a well orchestrated and rehearsed strategy to beat the coaches of other teams.

On the other hand, a coach who is “coaching to develop skills” is only concerned about making his players better by concentrating specifically on their individual skills like basic puck control, dynamic puck control, basic skating, dynamic skating, shooting, dekes, one-timers, passing and one-on-ones. The coach assesses the playing ability of his players and then follows linear skills development systems teaching his players how to be fundamentally skilled players who can be placed in and excel in any team system.

The “Coaching to win” philosophy works and is acceptable at only the highest levels of the game. Professional, collegiate and junior level coaches are hired to win. At these levels a coach’s job depends on his winning percentage, and by this time his players should have received enough individual skills development instruction throughout their careers to be competent players.

Inversely, coaches at any other level of the game, whether it is High School, Midget, Bantam, Pee Wee, Squirt, Mite, or Mini-Mite, should only be concerned with how to most effectively develop the individual skills of their players so that their players can ultimately perform in any team system at any level. Team systems at the lower levels should be basic and winning percentages should be an afterthought.

The reality is that if a coach is a good teacher, his players’ relatively superior individual skills inserted into simple team systems will ultimately win games against teams with less skilled players. Unfortunately, the majority of North American coaches don’t subscribe to the “coaching to develop skills” philosophy, and if they do, most coaches don’t know how to implement it. As a result, more and more North America players are being taught how to be position players who rely on size and physical play to dominate their opponents but for the most part don’t have any skills.

The next opportunity you have to watch a game or practice, time how long the best player on the ice actually handles the puck. In 2002, USA Hockey officials observed 4 Championship games – 2002 Olympic Gold Medal Game, 2002 Midget National Championship, 2002 Bantam National Championship, and the 2002 Pee Wee National Championship. The USA Hockey officials picked players who were expected to be key performers for each team.

