



COACH PROFILE

Burlington Atom MD Bulldogs



Nick Leonard - Head Coach

Name: Nick Leonard

Hometown: Burlington, ON

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Hockey jobs:

- Niagara Ice Dogs (OHL)
- Laura Stamm Power Skating Instructor
- Pass Hockey School
- Johnny Bower Goalie School.

Hockey Experience:

I began my hockey career in the Blomha system where I played three years before moving over to City Rep. While in City Rep I played AAA until my Midget year, after which time I then moved on to play for Notre Dame High School. I captained the team to two OFSAA appearances, six tournament championships, two GHAC titles, and a Halton title.

I also spent four years as a power skating/ stick handling instructor with SK8 4PWR, where I taught children and adults of all skill sets.

I just recently graduated from Brock University, with an Honours Degree in Sport Management, where I spent a season working with the Niagara Ice Dogs of the Ontario Hockey League.

Coaching philosophy:

My coaching philosophy depends on the age and skill set of the players that I coach. I feel that when coaching kids of a younger age, you must be very focused on skill development (such as skating, shooting, puck movement, and positional play), whereas when teaching an older age group with developed skills, it is important to have a more systems-focused approach, while at the same time incorporating continued skill development. I think it is extremely important as a coach to create an environment both on and off the ice where the kids can grow as players and people. I am a firm believer in the saying, "You get out what you put in" and with that being said, I intend to be the hardest worker on any team I am the coach of and will expect the same out of my players.

Coaching objectives:

- Foster an environment where all kids have the chance to become better hockey players, while at the same time develop their interest in the game of hockey itself.
- Take 17 different hockey players and make them into one team. It is very important that there be a team oriented atmosphere and avoid any division within the team. The best experiences I ever had while playing, were on teams that were tight knit with minimal division between players.
- While it is very important to ensure that all kids have fun, I also think it is very important to ensure that all kids improve throughout the year as hockey players.

Practice tips:

Practices are so important for the development of the kids. This is where things can be fine tuned. "You play like you practice". It is important to take note of what areas your team needs to work on so you are able to improve on those areas at practice.

Since practices are generally only an hour to an hour and a half, it is important to use the time before practice to 'pre-ice' the kids, meaning to go through the practice before actually getting on the ice. You do not want to be spending 10-15 minutes trying to explain a drill on the ice. The better prepared you are before the practice; the more smoothly the practice will run.

Another tip is to incorporate a variety of skills into a drill. Don't just always do simple skating drills or basic shooting drills but for example; take a skating drill at high speed and add a puck to challenge the kids. With skating drills, add pylons for quick turns to work on their edges. During games players will be stick handling at high speeds while making quick maneuvers, so why not have them doing this during practice.

There are three main areas to work on in practice which are, goaltending, defensive play, and offensive play. This is where the importance of a goalie coach, defensive coach, and offensive coach become very important.