

## **5 Tips for a Successful Tryout**

Chris Glionna has seen his fair share of hockey tryouts, both as a coach and parent.

In a conversation with USA Hockey, Glionna – head coach at Suffolk University – had plenty of advice for players and parents as they approach tryout season. Here are five things to focus on when kids are getting ready to showcase their skills on the ice:

### **Pay Attention and Work Hard**

When he evaluates potential players, Glionna looks for the ones who actually want to be there. That means he's focusing on the players who show that they're paying attention and ready to work harder than the competition.

"I think work ethic, obviously, is very important," Glionna said. "You're always looking for guys who work very hard. You're also looking for guys who can follow direction. If you're like, the fourth or fifth or sixth guy in line, and you're not doing the drill correctly, well that tells me that you're not a person who is going to pay attention to the details. Obviously if you're trying to catch a coach's eye, you want it to be for a positive thing, not a negative thing, like doing the drill incorrectly."

Don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand a drill or game.

### **Try to Be at the Front of the Line**

This tip hits rather close to home for Glionna, who has watched his own son gravitate to the wrong section of the line when waiting for the next drill to start.

"I do look to see that guys that are first in line, I think that's kind of an important thing," Glionna said. "It's actually something that my own son won't do, and it drives me crazy as a parent. When they go to do something, he tends to like to stay in the back. But I think it shows that there's a kid that wants to succeed, he wants to do well, if he's in the front of the line."

### **No Lazy Habits**

There are some things that are out of a player's control when he or she hits the ice for a tryout, but it's important to control that which is within their control. Glionna wants young athletes to demonstrate that they listened to that "keep your stick on the ice" phrase shouted at every hockey player at every level.

"Similar to what we talked about in doing the drills incorrectly, I would also just say lazy habits," Glionna said. "Skating with your stick up, things like that, things that the kids can control, you want to put yourself in the best position, and whether that's offensively or

defensively, it's having your stick down. Those are things as a coach that you look for in a tryout."

### **Stay Positive**

At the 12U level, it's important for players to know that a bad tryout or a missed opportunity doesn't have to leave a lasting impression on their aspiring hockey career.

"I think there are tons of examples out there of hockey players who were cut as bantams or midgets, and have gone on to play in the NHL, and even more examples of guys who were superstars at 13, 14, 15 that now play in a men's league," Glionna said. "Just because you don't make it this year, doesn't mean that with a little more hard work, things won't go differently for you in the fall of the following year."

That lesson matters just as much to the parents as it does the players. Glionna asks that parents try to keep everything in perspective and focus on what's really important.

"Remember, it's the kid's tryout, not your tryout," he said. "If your child doesn't make the team, it's not a reflection on you as a parent or your own athletic ability; it's just how things played out for the kid. You want to make sure, as a parent, that your son or daughter is out there having fun, smiling. That's really what you should be looking for, not who is going to make the team and things like that. That's not anything that a parent should be able to control. You just want to make sure that your child is having fun and enjoying the game."

### **Have Fun**

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, Glionna wants kids to have fun – even at a tryout. A happy hockey player is a better hockey player, and Glionna wants to work with players who want to be on the ice with him.

"I would just tell them to have fun with it," Glionna said. "You're always going to be better at your game when you're having fun. If you go into a tryout tense and worried about it, you're not going to play as well as you usually would. Again, it's just a tryout. Go out there and have fun. It's an opportunity to be with your friends, to skate and have fun. All kids should look at it that way."

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