

Chris Peterson – Candidate for Coaches Director

After nearly three decades of coaching at the high school, elite, and collegiate levels, I have come to believe that the strength of any hockey program is defined by the quality of its coaches. That belief is why I am running for Coaches Director for the Eden Prairie Hockey Association.

I grew up playing youth hockey in the Bloomington Jefferson program and played high school hockey at Academy of Holy Angels before continuing at the NCAA level at the University of St. Thomas and Gustavus Adolphus College. I began coaching at Gustavus and over the past 29 years have worked primarily with Girls Varsity programs at Eden Prairie High School, Shattuck St. Mary's, Hopkins, Breck, and Minnesota Revolution Tier 1. I have also been involved with the Girls High School Elite League since its inception and currently serve as a scout for the Ottawa Charge in the PWHL.

At the same time, I am a parent in this association. I currently coach my son at the Squirt level and my daughter at 10U. That perspective matters to me. I am not just invested in hockey as an observer, I am invested in the daily experience our players and families have at the rink.

Hockey is something we all care about deeply, but the impact of coaching goes beyond systems and drills. Kids are impressionable and we have the opportunity to impact them with the coaching we provide five or six days a week. Coaches influence how they compete, how they treat teammates, and how they represent Eden Prairie in the community. If we want strong players, we must first support strong coaches.

If elected, my focus would center on three priorities:

1. **Selecting Coaches Who Lead with Character:** Hockey knowledge matters, but leadership and integrity matter just as much. We are not just placing instructors behind the bench. We are placing role models. Coaches should be open to learning, willing to collaborate, and aligned in how they represent our association.
2. **Creating Greater Alignment Across the Association:** We have talented coaches in our program. The opportunity is to connect them more intentionally. I would encourage structured opportunities for coaches to sit down together, share ideas, ask questions, and learn from one another. Consistency of message across levels builds confidence for players and clarity for families.
3. **Support Ongoing Coach Growth:** Coach development should not end after preseason meetings. I would work to maintain steady communication and meaningful touchpoints throughout the season. Resources are plentiful. What makes the difference is accountability, shared standards, and support.

A positive experience should not depend on what level a player is on. Every team deserves leadership that models excellence, respect, and responsibility.

I look forward to bringing my experience and perspective to support our coaches and help Eden Prairie continue to set a high standard for leadership and player experience.