

COACH OF THE MONTH



ERIN MAY

Age: 40

Larchmont, N.Y.

Erin May's lifelong commitment to Mamaroneck Youth Hockey came full circle when she decided to become a coach.

The New York native has been coaching at the 8 & Under level for six years, but this year she is serving as head coach for her children's 8U, 10U and 12U teams—as well as running the women's program she started last year.

All told, between practices and games she spends more than 20 hours a week at the rink.

"I never would have thought I'd be head coach of three teams," May admitted. "But I'm back doing what I really love and my kids get to be involved. When I'm on the ice, I'm smiling, I feel like a kid again."

The Level 3 coach channels her love of the sport into her teams, remembering that respect goes both ways, regardless of age.

"It's the greatest sport in the world, but hockey needs to be fun," she said. "You can have fun and work hard at the same time."



THE HOCKEY MOM | By Christie Casciano Burns

Do You Have A Coachable Kid?

THERE ARE A VARIETY OF MOLDS that players can fit into on the ice. There's the big power forward who loves to work the corners, the slick puck-moving defenseman who leads the transition up ice, the playmaker who loves to set up a teammate and, of course, the dreaded sniper who has a knack for finding the back of the net.

Off the ice, there are just as many types of personalities that meld together to make up a team. You have the team clown, the natural leader, the team DJ, the diva, the sore loser and that one teammate who looks and acts like he would rather be doing something else... The list goes on.

Through all of the possible combinations of personality traits and abilities, there is one characteristic that is sure to propel a player to the top of any coach's favorites list. Coachability.

So, what can we as parents do to help cultivate that coachability gene in our kids?

"I think it is a skill just like anything else," says Matt Herr, senior director of youth hockey and industry growth for the NHL. "Kids need to learn to take constructive criticism and then put it to work whether in the classroom or on the ice."

"Kids aren't always going to agree with their coach's decision, but they always have to respect them."

Herr believes being a coachable kid is also a part of being a good teammate and wanting to encourage others to be a part of the overall mission.

St. Louis sports dad Kevin Duy (SportsDadHub.com) agrees. He reminds parents they need to emphasize to their kids the need to respect coaches, officials, teammates and opponents.

"Kids aren't always going to agree with their coach's decision, but they always have to respect them," Duy says. "Sports parents need to do a much better job modeling this behavior. No matter what, kids need to support and respect their teammates. They should never point fingers or place blame on their teammates after a loss."

Herr is certain every team at every level has the player that is not doing an extra push up or going all out on every sprint, or constantly trying to discredit the coach.

"All of this is a piece of being a coachable player, and should be a skill coaches and parents can help with," Herr says.

"Players need to learn to approach a coach during times of trouble and disagreement with an open mind, hopefully creating a productive conversation that leads to a better line of communication."

Being coachable doesn't end outside the rink, and it doesn't happen overnight. In all settings—from professional and academic, to personal relationships — everyone notices those who are coachable.

We hope our kids walk away from the game with life lessons that will stick with them long after they hang up their skates. This is one we can start working on right away. ☆