**David Hutchison U11A Coach’s Letter**

My name is David Hutchison and I am thrilled to coach the Ottawa Sting U11A team for the 2022-23 season. This is my second season coaching with the Ottawa Sting and my third season as a minor hockey Head Coach.

**Philosophy**

My overriding focus is on long-term player development.  As coaches and parents, I believe we need to maintain a big picture perspective about our kids’ participation in competitive hockey.  The goal is to try to maximize each player’s full potential as athletes and hockey players, by developing mastery of the skills and how to play the game (Hockey IQ).  This is a long-term process and along the way, we hope that the players develop passion for the sport and learn valuable life skills that will serve them in all walks of life.  This includes: self-confidence, teamwork, respect, discipline and commitment.  Most importantly, we need to balance all of the hard work with a fun, encouraging and positive atmosphere.  We want players who are excited to get to the rink and thrive in the process of improvement and competition.

Practices are the most valuable opportunity for player and team development. In my practice planning, I try to balance all aspects of the game. Skating is the foundation of the game and I prioritize strides and edgework. Practices are high tempo, where players develop stick skills at speed. My practices include a good balance of skating and skill development, high tempo full ice compete drills, opportunities for tactical team-play teaching and small area games to permit players to learn how to compete and make decisions under pressure. Goaltenders are given special attention with a dedicated assistant and guest skill coaches.

 In terms of style of play, my first area of emphasis is the development of a team identity based on high compete level and a tenacious style of play. This is expressed through relentless pressure on the forecheck and backcheck. I strongly believe in a full 5 player attack, where the D are activated and forwards know when to fill in. On my teams, there is a great emphasis on passing, as this skill can be a major factor in promoting strong team play and permitting players to reach the next level.

**Expectations and Season**

U11A tryouts will follow the U11AA tryouts. I am looking for players who are strong skaters, skilled, hard working, with great attitudes and a team orientation.

Competitive hockey is a serious time commitment. We will be on the ice 4-5 times per week including practices and games. Players are expected to attend all practices and games, and to be on time.

We are confirmed for the following 4 tournaments:

* Kitchener Oktoberfest October 21-23
* Mississauga Scotiabank Cup November 11-13
* Bell Capital Cup (Ottawa) December 29-31
* Oakville Winter Classic January 20-22

A successful competitive hockey team requires a major team effort of dedicated parent volunteers. My expectation is that a parent from every family will make a significant contribution. Required volunteer positions include: Team Manager, Assistant Coach, Trainer, Treasurer, Videographer, Dressing Room Supervisors, Fundraising/Sponsorship, Photographer/Social Media, Statistician and a few other roles.

I wish everyone a great summer and look forward to seeing the U11 players after Labour Day!

David Hutchison