



MINOR ATOM "A"

Coach's Letter

2009-2010 Season

Dear Parents,

I have been chosen to coach the Ottawa Sting Minor Atom 'A' team and I am excited about working with what I expect to be a talented and motivated group. I feel that I can provide good guidance and aid in each player's development. I will strive to create a positive atmosphere where every player is challenged and supported by their team mates both on and off the ice.

My experience in hockey spans thirty years and includes playing for the National Junior Team, Olympic team (1992), NHL, and four seasons overseas in Sweden and Finland. Even with these experiences, one of my fondest hockey memories is as a 10 year old playing in Victoria, British Columbia. My coach was a University of Victoria professor of Sports Physiology and what made the experience so wonderful was not an emphasis on winning but instead his positive outlook and emphasis on fun. These memories have stayed with me all of these years and I would like to replicate this approach with this team.

During my playing years in Sweden, I was impressed with the Swedish minor hockey system's emphasis on skill development at all ages. With this perspective in mind, I would like to pay particular attention to ongoing individual skill development during our practices.

Since my earlier letter of introduction this past June, I now have the following additional information to share, which is organized below according to the following headings:

- Tryout Information
 - Non-Goalie Tryout Procedure
 - Information Specific to Non-Goalie Positions
 - Goalie Tryout Procedure
- Minor Atom "A" Team Information
 - Ice Time Expectations for Team
 - Tournaments
 - Parent Meeting Once Team is Formed
 - September Ice Times

Tryout Information:

Non-Goalie Tryout Procedure

Please consult the Sting website for details of your child's first tryout session on Wednesday September 2. Every player will participate in three tryout sessions before any player is released to their Home Association. The first session on Wednesday September 2 will be a regular practice format incorporating various drills. The next two sessions, on Friday September 4 and Saturday September 5, will be scrimmages.

On the Wednesday night, players will be provided with a schedule listing their jersey colour and times for the scrimmages on the Friday and the Saturday.

Following the Saturday scrimmages, players will be notified by e-mail of either their ice time for the final tryout session on Sunday September 6 or their release to their Home Association.

Following the Sunday scrimmages, players will be notified by e-mail of either their team assignment (to the A Team or the B Team) or their release to their Home Association.

Two independent evaluators will be assisting me in selecting players for the A Team. Players will be assessed with regard to skating ability, level of hockey skills, hockey sense, and competitiveness. The assessments will be based on the practice session and scrimmages.

Information Specific to Non-Goalie Positions

My philosophy regarding player positions is that players at the age of nine years old should be encouraged to try different positions. Not only does the player learn the game of hockey from various perspectives, but also the player may realize that they enjoy/thrive in a position they had never even considered. It would be easier, and in the short run probably more successful for the team, if I kept kids in one position for the year and had them "specialize" at that position. However, this is counterproductive to their development as well-rounded hockey players and does not develop their hockey skills to the fullest capacity. During the tryouts, the evaluators and I will not be focusing on a player's positional play. Instead, as previously mentioned, I will focus on their skating ability, hockey skill level, hockey sense, and competitiveness.

Goalie Tryout Procedure

There is an introductory ice session for all goalies with the Ottawa Sting goalie coach on Tuesday, September 1. Coaches for the A and B Teams will be at this session.

At the Tuesday session, goalies will be assigned to ice sessions for the Wednesday practice and the Friday and Saturday scrimmages. Goalies will be notified Saturday by e-mail of their ice time for the final scrimmage session on Sunday September 6.

Goalies are also required to attend the "goalie only" session the evening of Sunday September 6. Evaluations will be based on all sessions except for the initial introductory session. Following the Sunday September 6 "goalie only" session, goalies will be notified by e-mail of either their team assignment (to the A Team or the B Team) or their release to their Home Association.

Minor Atom "A" Team Information:

Ice Time Expectations for Team

Here is my understanding of how ice allocation generally works in Ottawa: ice time in city-owned rinks is first allocated to minor hockey associations and other large groups. Left over ice is then available to the general public on a first-come-first-serve basis.

In competitive hockey, there is an expectation that the individual team will purchase extra ice from the City to supplement the minor hockey association's allocation. The purpose of this extra ice time is to fill in any lengthy gaps that may occur in our Sting allocation.

My personal preference is a regular practice schedule at regular times known months in advance so that everyone can plan accordingly. The reality is that regular practice days, times and venues

are not possible. Despite this, so far I have been happy with the ice times and notice given to me by the Sting. The job of ice scheduler is often a thankless job and we should remember that it is a volunteer position.

The first day that left over City ice was available to the general public was Tuesday, August 4. Our team practice schedule is so important to me that I arrived in the (very) early morning hours that day and was first in line out of more than twenty-five people to participate in the reservation of left over ice. Unfortunately there was not much ice available at desirable times and I reserved less than expected. The team manager will be in charge of reserving additional ice to supplement our Sting allocation as well as to supplement or give back the ice that I have already reserved.

My preference is for the team to be on the ice a maximum of four times per week including practices and games. We will not have off-ice conditioning but our practices will be high tempo and physically challenging. There are twenty-eight regular season league games. The league starts in early October and runs through until February with playoffs in late February and into March.

Tournaments

There was a strong possibility that tournaments would fill up before the team was selected so I have registered the team in the following tournaments:

October 9 – 12	Nepean Thanksgiving Tournament (accepted)
October 23 – 25	Kingston Area MHA Tournament (accepted)
December 30 – January 3	Bell Capital Cup (accepted)
February 5 – 7	Verdun Tournament (application pending)

Parent Meeting Once Team Is Formed

I have tentatively scheduled a parent meeting for Saturday, September 12 to correspond with a scheduled ice session. At this meeting, I will elaborate further on my expectations and requirements for the team this season. I will choose my manager when the team is selected and hope to present details on a team budget at this time.

September Ice Times

Monday, September 7	Walkley Arena	6:30 pm
Thursday, September 10	Minto Arena	7:30 pm
Saturday, September 12	Kilrea Arena	10:00 am
Sunday, September 13	Minto Arena	9:30 am
Monday, September 14	Sandy Hill	7:00 pm
Thursday, September 17	Brewer Arena	6:00 pm
Sunday, September 20	Sandy Hill Arena	7:00 am
Saturday, September 26	Barbara Ann Scott Arena	1:00 pm
Sunday, September 27	Minto Arena	7:30 am
Tuesday, September 29	Peplinski Arena	6:00 pm

I trust this information is helpful but please contact me if you need further clarification or have any questions.

Thank you,

Kent Manderville

kmanderville@nhlpa.com