



## 09-10 Ottawa Sting Minor PeeWee AA



### **Background:**

My name is Sean O'Connor and I would like to formally introduce myself as the Head Coach of the Ottawa Sting Minor PeeWee AA team for the 2009-10 season. I have spent the last seven seasons with the Gloucester Rangers, the last five of those years being at the Minor or Major PeeWee AA level. I feel I have a very good understanding of the PeeWee aged player and what he or she is capable of learning and executing. I expect players to be fully committed to improving both individually and as a team throughout the season. Practices are extremely important and something I take very seriously. The ice time is expensive and it's the best time for our team to improve as players and as a team.

### **Tryout Evaluation:**

Players deserve the right to know what is expected of them entering tryouts. This is a big jump year, there is now full body contact and we play 15-15-18 minute periods at Minor PeeWee. The game is now much different than Atom hockey and new skills are required to compete at the AA level. The following are pretty broad and include many skills, but as a coach there are three basic skills I expect a AA player to possess and execute at a high level, I consider these foundation skills:

#### **1) Skating**

- i. is one of the most important skills a AA player needs
- ii. AA players need to be able to skate with speed, power and agility
- iii. it is one of the most distinguishable difference between a AA player and one from a lower level

#### **2) Passing (includes Puck Control)**

- i. AA players should be able to see the ice well, and be willing to move the puck as needed
- ii. using teammates to create scoring chances is crucial
- iii. players need individual skill, but it shouldn't compromise team play or the willingness to pass the puck

#### **3) Shooting**

- i. quick release, power, accuracy are all things I want to see in a AA player
- ii. the ability to shoot to score and with purpose are very important
- iii. ability to get shots off in traffic and when in the prime scoring zone.



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Once the foundation skills have been established I start to look for these areas to round out the best AA players possible:

### 1) Physical Play

- i. includes the ability to *give* a hit along with being able to *take* a hit
- ii. using physical play to win battles for pucks

### 2) Positional Play

- i. this includes offensive and defensive zone positioning
- ii. in a tryout players can exhibit this by understanding some basic ideas related to where to be in certain situations
- iii. a lot of these skills will be taught and learned throughout the season

### 3) Work Ethic/Coachability

- i. hard work is extremely crucial to overall team success that it is something that I must see in a AA player
- ii. it sounds so easy and simple, but a team that tries hard and has skill is tough to beat and play against
- iii. short shifts, listening to instruction, playing as a team are all ways to display coachability in tryout sessions

Whenever you step on the ice always try your absolute best to demonstrate that you not only have individual skill, but also the ability to work in a team environment and make your teammates better. Taking the puck and never passing, trying to go thru the entire team will not impress me or the evaluators. I would much rather see the defenseman that can head man the puck then jump into the attack as the late man, than the one that takes the puck from behind the net and tries to deke the entire team. I will be more impressed with the forward that can work a give and go, or execute a 3 on 2 than the one that thinks he or she can beat everyone alone.

Goalies obviously have an entirely different skill set that is required. There are many different styles they have all proven to be successful. Since this is such a unique position I plan on having at least one (hopefully two to three) *independent* goalie instructor doing specific goalie evaluations. By independent I mean evaluators that have not taught any of the goalies trying out; this will give me an independent assessment of the goalies that are in camp and will add to what myself and the evaluation team observes in camp. As a goalie trying out I encourage you to be comfortable using whatever style you have used in the past and what you are most familiar with. The goalie evaluator(s) won't be looking for a specific type of goalie; they will be evaluating each goalie based on merit and skills displayed in camp.



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### Tryout Process:

The tentative plan is to have a group of twenty (20) skaters & three (3) goalies broken down as follows: twelve (12) forwards, eight (8) defenceman & three (3) goalies break away after the first weekend of tryouts. From there this group will play a series of exhibition games to help form the AA team for the 09-10 season. This is tentative and there are still some details to be worked out, but once it is confirmed, I will communicate this to the players and parents.

**\*\*\*\*\*UPDATED Aug 5/09\*\*\*\*\***

Tryouts have been broken into three phases. **Phase 1** will be four teams, playing three inter-squad games against each other. **Phase 2** we will reduce down to two teams (18F, 12D, 4G total), they will play each other in two inter-squad games and two exhibition games against Gloucester. **Phase 3**, AA Bubble Group is identified (12F, 8D, 3G) and they play a home and home exhibition series against Kanata. They will then play one last inter-squad game against each other and the AA team will be formed.

This is a very intense schedule with games going on every day. I would encourage players to make sure they are well rested and ready to go for each tryout game. Hydration and rest are very important and should not be overlooked. I would suggest that after each game players try and drink a chocolate milk as soon as possible after the game. There are numerous benefits to be gained from drinking chocolate milk after each workout such as muscle repair and electrolyte replacement.

### Tournaments:

There are five tournaments booked for the 09-10 season. The three out of town tournaments are all AAA level and will push the players to perform at the highest level possible. I always take teams to AAA tournaments as I feel this is the best way to push the players to reach higher and be the best they can. The following tournaments have been booked:

- 1) **7<sup>th</sup> Annual KMHA September AAA Shootout**  
*Kanata, ON*  
September 11/09 – September 13/09
- 2) **Markham Majors Fall Classic Tournament**  
*Markham, ON*  
October 9/09 – October 11/09



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- 3) **Kitchener Blueline International AAA Hockey Tournament**  
*Kitchener, ON*  
November 26/09 – November 29/09
- 4) **11th Annual Bell Capital Cup**  
*Ottawa, ON*  
December 30/09 – January 3/09
- 5) **Festival of Lights PeeWee Tournament**  
*Niagara Falls, ON*  
January 8/10 – January 10/10

### **Closing Remarks:**

Tryouts start on August 22/09 and I am very excited to get started with a new team and organization. Remember, the purpose of the tryout process is to make sure each player is placed at the *appropriate level for their ability*. If you played AA last year, you are not guaranteed a spot on the AA team; if you played Rep B last season you could make the AA team. Bottom line, be prepared to earn whatever position you want to achieve. At the end of the day the evaluation teams at all levels are trying to place players at the best level for development.

Come to camp with an open mind and a willingness to display individual skills in a team setting (see above for some of the keys myself and the evaluation team are looking for). Thanks for taking the time to read and I am looking forward to seeing all the players and want to wish you the best of luck with your tryout this season.

**Sean O'Connor**

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