

Motivational Messages for the Hockey Coach

What to say in the locker room prior to the game? For some coaches, it is the toughest part of their role. Talk too much and you risk losing the attention of the players or confusing them. Talk too often and they start to tune you out. Don't say enough and maybe your not doing your job. Where do you start? And just as importantly, where do you end?

Locker room talks should be tailored to speak to the age level and skill level of the players. The younger they are, the less you need to say, and the simpler it should be. The older they are, and the higher skill level they are at, the more you need to say, but don't go overboard.

At all levels you should choose two or three things to focus on and make that the topic of the day. Be brief and to the point to get your message across. Just as importantly, follow up on those same topics after the game, and maybe at the next practice as well, to reinforce things that went well, and remind them they can improve on the things that didn't. Some can't miss pointers that can be used, and

expanded on depending on the age and level are:

1. Win the races to the puck
2. Win the one on one battles for the puck
3. Play your position and let your teammates play theirs
4. Play your position and the puck will come to you
5. Make smart plays with the puck
6. Don't pass because you think you need to, pass because it is the right play
7. Don't be afraid to make a mistake
8. Work together as a team. It's not an individual game
9. Be alert on the bench, know who you are replacing on the ice
10. Be involved and in the right spot. Don't stand still and watch.
11. Shoot the puck. A shot on goal is never a bad play
12. Most goals are scored on rebounds. Go to the net on every shot looking for a rebound.
13. Forwards help out defensemen in your own end by being in position for a pass when we get the puck.
14. The first pass in your own zone is the most important. Make sure it is on the stick
15. Never turn your back on the puck. Know where it is at all times
16. Don't stand still with the puck. Get skating and make a play
17. Work just as hard in your own end as you do in the other team's end
18. Our goalie should only have to make the first save. Clear rebounds quickly
19. Stay out of the penalty box
20. Play hard and play smart