

A Letter of Introduction from Tom Tilley, KC Stars Hockey Director

My name is Tom Tilley. I am honored and excited to be named Hockey Director for the Kansas City Stars hockey organization. As my first order of business, I wanted to send a note to all of the Stars families to thank you for being a member of our great organization. You are what make the Kansas City Stars hockey organization such a great program and a leader in the Kansas City area and throughout our region. We realize there are several organizations in the city you can choose to join. My goal is to make positive organizational changes that will result in an even better experience for our existing families and create an attractive opportunity for families who may consider joining the Stars. Successful growth will add more teams and more opportunities at every level for Stars hockey players.

When asked about hockey by non-hockey families, I tell them that hockey goes beyond just being a sport. It is a lifestyle choice for families involving a long season and a substantial time and financial commitment, particularly at the travel level. The best part of the game is the great relationships that are forged throughout the seasons among the players, their parents and even siblings. Some of my best friends to this day are people I played hockey with growing up in Canada.

The Stars Board of Directors and I realize that the expense of playing hockey must be justified by a positive, fun and rewarding family experience at all competitive levels.

We are committed to the development of all players at all levels.

My belief is that the success of any organization depends on:

- Communication
- Planning
- Execution

With those concepts in mind, here are my action items for the coming season:

COMMUNICATION

Email: Regular emails before and during the season to communicate important information on the organization as well as to share positive stories about Stars teams and people throughout the year.

New Website: We are soon rolling out a new website that will be easier to navigate and will include a parents section. There will be a Stars organizational chart starting at the top with Stars Board members on down through the Hockey Director and other key Stars personnel. There will be contact information available. There will be new sections on the website aimed at better communication to our families. Keep checking in the website for updates and additions.

Coaching and Competition Committee: The “CCC” is a three person committee that I will chair. The purpose of the CCC is to field, sort through and resolve any problems that may arise regarding teams, coaching and related “on ice” issues. It is an anonymous process to give parents an

effective means of expressing their questions and concerns without worrying about perceived consequences or repercussions. Hockey can be a very physical and emotional sport which can lead to issues along the way. This committee was formed to establish a reporting process and to solve issues before they become big issues. Any problems will be handled professionally, quickly and quietly.

Evaluations and Tryouts: There will be clear and complete advance information regarding house evaluations, travel team tryouts and select team tryouts. The selection process will be explained. Anticipated expenses, game schedules, practice information and other important information will be made available in advance. We will host a parent meeting during the evaluations or tryouts involving members of the Board, the Hockey Director and coaches. Expectations will be defined relating to conduct of players, coaches and parents as members of the Stars organization and consistent with the policies adopted by USA Hockey, including Zero Tolerance.

There will be independent evaluators (myself and one or two other qualified, independent people) attending a minimum of one house evaluation or travel tryout in an effort to help our coaches assess players and complete team selection. It is difficult in some instances for one individual to run a practice or scrimmage and make evaluations in a short period of time. The Hockey Director (me) will do a final review of all travel team rosters prior to posting.

Our objective is to form teams in a coordinated, organized and fair manner consistent with the developmental and competitive parameters specified for each team. By doing so, each player and family will be able to make an informed

choice that is appropriate for their unique objectives, expectations and circumstances.

Sportsmanship and Conduct: Last season saw an inexplicable rise in inappropriate coach, player and parent conduct locally and regionally. We intend to refocus our organization with regard to proper conduct and sportsmanship. Appropriate information will be posted on the Stars website in the parents section and distributed to coaches at all levels within the organization. We hold Stars players, coaches and parents to an even higher standard as representatives of our program and our city. As part of this process, all players, coaches and parents in the Stars hockey program will be asked to sign contracts setting forth our expectations governing conduct. We will therefore eliminate any confusion about our expectations. Any violations will be fully reviewed and subject to a full range of sanctions.

Survey: There will be an on-line survey going out to all Stars families in the next couple of weeks. I encourage everyone to take the time to fill out. It is an evaluation of our organization from top to bottom and will be used to improve the organization based on the feedback from you, our customers. We need your honest feedback, good and bad, so that we can see where our strengths are as well as where we need to improve to make your experience great.

Orientation: Prior to the season we will have a Stars orientation meeting designed for families new to our area and program. I encourage any existing families who would like to attend to be there. We will discuss everything from our goals as an organization to information on our house and travel programs. We will be available to answer questions on all things related to the Stars Hockey program. I anticipate

this meeting happening in late August and an e-mail will go out well in advance of the meeting.

PLANNING

Travel Coaches: I have been in contact already with most of the travel coaches from last year in an attempt to get travel coaches slotted by the end of May so everyone interested in trying out at the travel level will know well in advance who the coach will be. My goal is to have the best coaches in the city and give them the tools and resources to have the highest level of coaching for Stars families. Winning games takes care of itself if you start with these things in mind.

House Coaches: I have also been in touch with a number of the house coaches. I will place as many as possible prior to the season but travel tryouts will have an impact on designating house coaches.

Coaching Certification: All coaches will be required to obtain appropriate USA Hockey Coaching Education Program certification for the level they are coaching. We have already been in touch with the regional USA Hockey CEP coordinator. We are shooting for an early September certification program for Levels 1, 2 and 3. More information will be sent out as we solidify the dates.

Travel Coach Support: There will be a travel hockey coach's forum once the travel positions are filled. They will get to know one another and collaborate as a group to incorporate USA Hockey age appropriate drills and skill development as well as share practice plans and game strategies. Eventually I envision having uniform teaching methods as well as a clear progression plan from Squirt

through Midget/High School. I believe this will make better individual players as well as more competitive teams within our organization. The handoff from level to level and coach to coach will be much smoother for all involved.

House Coach Support: In addition to USA Hockey certification and education I will lead an on and off-ice clinic for house coaches prior to or early in the season. USA Hockey coaching certification tends to be fairly general because of the amount of information that must be covered. My instruction will be related to effective and efficient practices, planning a practice as well as some basic strategy discussions.

EXECUTION

I assure all Stars families that I will work diligently to treat everyone with respect and dignity and provide value and a great experience with our organization moving forward. Over the next year, you will see the steps I have outlined above put into place. Ultimately, you will have the opportunity to decide whether our implementation and execution have been successful for your family or not. There certainly won't be any lack of effort in this regard from the Stars organization.

As the Stars Hockey Director, I will be visible and available. I will lead by example as a coach and as a parent to portray the Stars organization as the first class, extremely competitive organization that we are today.

To the families I know already, I look forward to another great season. I am looking forward to meeting many new families. I hope to be of assistance to your family whenever

needed. Please be sure to introduce yourselves to me when you see me at the rink!

Regards,

Tom Tilley
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