

Hello everyone,

I hope that the past season was as fun you as it was for me. After talking with coaches, players and several parents I can honestly say that this past year was a success and a step forward for the club. Hopefully we can all get a little rest now with fewer weekends at the rink.

Even though the season has now come to a close and we only have tournaments and summer training to look forward to in the short term, I can't help but think about next year in advance. A large amount of progress in hockey players is made during the offseason. At all levels of hockey, the difference between falling through the cracks and making huge personal breakthroughs is made during the offseason. I have many stories, both positive and negative, about players, the work they put in over the summer and the results. Here is a short but important one (if you want to hear more than feel free to ask):

At the age 14 I played with a lot of high level players on an internationally competitive team. My coaches had a tough job of picking the team that year because of the quality of players and in the end we had a team of 19. One of the 25 players cut from that team was a close friend of mine who played on a team at the level below and had an average season. After the year was finished there was a definite divide between my teammates and my friend in terms of ability, particularly speed. He and I then attended a short seminar on the importance of off-ice work and we asked my coach to develop an off-ice training program. Admittedly, he put in a lot more effort than I did. At the end of the summer he trialed again, made the team and was a permit fixture on the second line. Every summer after that, he went through tougher and tougher off-ice programs and eventually earned his way on to a very good NCAA Div3 hockey team and finally played in a professional league on the west coast of the US. He still skates circles around me when we are both in our home town.

That is the reason why I have decided to put together a weekly off-ice newsletter to send to the club. I hope to persuade most players and parents to take up off-ice work over the summer. In the next instalment, I will briefly explain the physiology of energy systems behind hockey and why it is I have chosen to structure off-ice programs like I do. I will also try to give a work out of the week and hope to receive some feedback as to how the players are progressing.

I hope everyone can find this helpful and look forward to hearing how things go.

Jeff