

# High-Quality Year-End Meetings

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## 1. Preparation

Here are some quick tips / reminders to help you prepare for your year-end meetings

- Remember, you need to serve every player, not just your stars.
- Discuss the player's strengths, don't just focus on their weaknesses.
- Be honest about where the player stands on the team and where they fit in to the continued plan.
- Meet in person, include the parents - they are shareholders in this endeavor.
- Be prepared to describe the purpose of an evaluation meeting and how an assessment of the past helps us prepare for the future.



## 2. Execution

The execution of your year-end meetings is critical. Below you will find some key ideas to ensure your meetings stay on course and productive.

**Why does development matter** - in order for the player to buy in, they need to know why their development is important. As a coach, it is your job to create confidence in clarity of your vision for them moving forward. The answer for each player will likely vary. For some, the vision may be around marketability of the player, others may need to understand how it will make them a better leader, some need to see how the development will make them a bigger impact player, and others will need to understand how their growth will make the game more enjoyable. Regardless of the specifics, it is important to generate excitement around the process. Be sure to be specific about why the development matters.

**Create a development plan** - this is the most time-consuming part of the process. This will require you to spend time thinking about each player on an individual basis and evaluate what areas of the game will give them the most growth potential. Take your time with this - a well prepared development plan shows players and parents your level of commitment and caring. Development plans should include specific elements of focus - go in to detail. Customize each plan based on the player's position as well as their playing level.

Here are four key areas to consider when preparing any player's development plan - regardless of position:

- 1) Skating - every player needs to be a good skater - every player has weaknesses in their skating that need to be developed (including goaltenders).
- 2) Respect for the game - is the player respecting the game in how he/she shows up on a consistent basis? This includes preparation, passion, competitive level, etc.
- 3) Character Traits - what character traits need to be developed? Determination? Tenacity? Persistence?
- 4) Student of the Game - in order for players to reach the next level, they have to know the game. Through technology, players today have access to an unprecedented amount of hockey footage on the internet and through television. Instruct the players on what to watch for the next time they are just "watching hockey."

**Share your vision & plan for next season** - along with showing why the development matters to the individual, it is helpful for players (and parents) to understand the vision for the upcoming season. Clarity of the vision helps generate excitement about the development process. Sharing the plan for next season illustrates your own commitment to the team and growth of the players.

## 3. Follow-Up

The follow-up portion of the process is where you finalize the plan laid out and get the process started. Here are key elements to think about when wrapping up your meetings and laying the groundwork for improvement in the season to come.

- **Agreement** - establishing agreement with player (and parents) that what has been discussed matters in regard to the commitment to ongoing improvement. Key question: does the player agree that the plan laid out is accurate and useful to their development?
- **Commitment** - get a commitment for a plan / process for improvement to occur. Figure out what the specifics are going to be. This might be going to the gym 5x per week, working with a skating instructor, or working on stickhandling at home - whatever the individual process is, get a commitment from the player.
- **Support** - offer support in the process of development through the off-season. Maybe you have the ability to be an active part in their training - or maybe your support is just in helping keep them accountable. If nothing else, ask this question: how can I help you with your process?
- **Reading** - we believe more athletes should be developing themselves beyond just the physical elements of the game. Would it be timely to recommend a book to a particular player - or perhaps the entire team?
- **Enthusiasm Built?** - did you excite the family about the plans for the upcoming season and share with them how **you are** going to make the next season even better? Proper execution here helps with morale and player retention.



Coming soon...Eric Hoffberg & Kevin Muller have teamed up to offer a unique perspective on the hockey season. **A Different Approach** will take you through how to build and plan your season with intention.

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