

Team Dynamics and Team Systems: A Primer

Introduction:

At the 2016 Junior Nationals Dave Jensen, the coach of the HP junior women's team took a couple of minutes to talk to Team Willertz before their game against the HP Junior Women. He was very gracious and sincere and told them that when he coached young teams in the past and they were facing an older, more experienced team they needed to do a couple of things during the game. He encouraged my girls to watch how the more experienced girls communicated with each other on the ice. Watch and listen to what they say to each other and how they say it. What do they do after a miss or after a made shot? How do they interact with each other throughout the game? What do they do and how do they do it? The bottom line is that a championship team acts like champions in everything they do on and off the ice.

So what do they do? The following is a list of procedures that is a part of all championship team's DNA. Some of them I saw and some are things that I have compiled into a list for my teams to contemplate during the preseason. Each team will modify and tweak the conversation they have to have in order to institute these team systems. Feel free to use them with your team and I hope to see you at Nationals!

The Big Ideas are:

- Timeout Procedures
- Communication Norms
- Team Dynamics and Roles
- Pre-Game, In-Game, and Post-Game Procedures
- And there are so many more. What else do you think you should add to this basic list?

Here are some questions to get the conversation started with your team:

1. How does the front end give input regarding strategy decisions?
2. How do you change a shot?
3. What happens when a timeout is called?
4. How do you call a timeout? How much time will elapse before you call a timeout?
5. What do you want to hear after a miss? From the skip? From your teammates?
6. What happens when the sweepers over/under sweep a shot?
7. What does the shooter do after the release?
8. How do you communicate?
 - How does the team know the shot?
 - In a noisy environment?
 - Sweep
 - Weight calls
 - Which Sweeper
 - Switching
9. Who watches and times the opponent's rock?
10. What is everyone's role on the team?
 - a. Decision-Maker
 - b. Assistant Decision Maker
 - c. Liaison between the front end and back end
 - d. Who wakes everyone up when it gets quiet?
 - e. Who is the cheerleader?
 - f. Are there other roles that need to be defined?
11. How does the team debrief after the game? When and Where? How long after?
12. What happens when and if communication breaks down?
13. How do you warm up?
 - Individually off the ice
 - Pre-Game Practice
 - Pre Event Practice