



LET'S PLAY HOCKEY SPECIAL SECTION

Summer HOCKEY GUIDE 2025

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Endurance training for gold medals and youth development: Always fast!

The unbreakable law of neuro-science: you become what you repeat most often.

by **JACK BLATHERWICK**

Let's Play Hockey Columnist

Young players – you should know that your future depends on many qualities, but speed and speed-endurance are essential. Do not miss the lesson by the three M's: MacKinnon, McDavid, and Makar.

Two USA Teams trained purposefully for speed of execution for months prior to their Gold-medal Olympic wins: the 1980 men and 2018 women. There was no slow conditioning – none – and both teams competed for the entire game at the fast pace that was their objective.

Consider how absurd it sounds to plan for this objective in the traditional, recommended way: do a lot of **slow conditioning** in order to maintain **speed** throughout the game. Academic-Greek words (aerobic, anaerobic) have served only to hide the truth. Stated simply, without academic language: the real purpose of endurance conditioning is to maintain, for an entire game, the fastest pace possible while executing all skills.

The neurological fact that cannot be ignored when you train is this: repetitions form habits in your Central Nervous System (CNS is the brain plus the spinal cord) whether you intend for that to happen or not. If you repeat slow movement – such as jogging or skating while fatigued – you



might call it constructive effort, but inefficient, slow habits are being imprinted in your CNS memory bank.

To develop speed-endurance, the two Gold-Medal Teams first asked this question: Knowing that we want to practice skills at an uncomfortably-fast pace, does this also improve stamina? Short answer: YES. Using modern technologies, Dr. George A. Brooks and others have shown that High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) increases aerobic-CV fitness, while training for explosive qualities required to even think about a gold medal: speed, skill and strength.

The 1980 'Miracle on Ice' was really no miracle at all. It was the result of five months of gut-wrenching, high speed, two-hour practices. We called

it OverSpeed. There was never a slow drill – or the wrath of Coach Brooks was unleashed, resulting in the dreaded 'Herbies' – stops-and-starts, skating the lines – highlighted in the movie.

The 2018 women had the same goal every workout – on and off the ice for two years. Coaches Robb Stauber, Brett Strot, and Paul Mara kept the pedal to the floor, knowing the Canadian women were strong, fast, skillful and ferocious competitors – a combination that wasn't defeated until late in the third period and overtime.

Did either of these USA teams dominate? Of course not. That was never considered a possibility in the planning. But in both cases, OverSpeed preparation (uncomfortably fast) made the two U.S. Gold Medalists comfortable with the elevated pace of play against the top opponents in the world, every shift of every game.

OverSpeed is essential for any player or any team that wants to compete faster at a later date.

...the real purpose of endurance conditioning is to maintain, for an entire game, the fastest pace possible while executing all skills.

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25

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MAKE AN IMPACT.

Perfect World Hockey Training: Is Your Off-Ice Program High-Quality?

Does Your Training Focus on Hockey-Specific Movements?

The best off-ice training programs are based on the principal of dynamic correspondence. Which emphasizes exercises that replicate the demands of hockey and directly translate to on-ice performance. If your gym relies on generic exercises like bench, squat and deadlift, or puts athletes of multiple sports on the same program, they don't understand the principle of dynamic correspondence and you aren't training for hockey.

At PWHT, we only train hockey players and goalies. Our programs

are designed to build hockey-specific strength, speed, and power. From hockey specific jumps and sprints to hockey-specific sled pushes, our exercises mimic the biomechanics of the game to maximize on-ice results. This commitment to sport-specific training ensures that the time you spend in the gym translates directly to improved performance on the ice.

Are Your Trainers Experts in Hockey-Specific Training?

The expertise of your trainers matters. Do they have advanced education in strength and conditioning? Have they worked with elite hockey players? With-

out these qualifications, how do you know you're getting the best?

PWHT is led by Dr. Zack Rourk, a PhD in Kinesiology who also directs a master's program in strength and conditioning. Every member of our team holds a minimum of a master's degree in strength and conditioning and has years of experience working with athletes from Bantam levels to the pros, including NHL players such as Marcus Foligno, Jason Zucker, Anders Lee, and Nick Schmaltz. This depth of knowledge and experience ensures that our programs are not only effective but also grounded in the latest sports science.

Is Your Training Program Holistic?

Is your gym just a gym? Can your trainer help guide you to all the resources necessary to develop your game? Developing as a hockey player in Minnesota is too competitive to have a hole in your development plans.

At PWHT, we are more than just an off-ice training center; we are a Hockey Development Solutions Company. With over 15 years of experience solving hockey problems for families from the Bantam and U15 levels to the pros, we have the expertise to help you overcome any roadblock. If it's outside of our scope of practice we can connect you with the best professionals in on-ice development, nutrition, sports psychology, injury care or any other aspect of hockey development. Think of PWHT as your hockey concierge service. No matter what challenge you face, we're here to take care of it.

Conclusion

Identifying high-quality training starts with asking the right questions: Does it focus on hockey-specific movements and dynamic correspondence? Are the trainers qualified? Does it take a holistic approach? At PWHT the answer is yes. Based in Edina, MN, we train boys and girls ages 13 to professional. Visit www.perfectworldhockey.com to schedule a consultation. Don't live in the area? Try our remote training program.

By Dr. Zack Rourk
Owner and Founder of Perfect World Hockey Training
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Confidence: The Top Priority in Youth Hockey Coaching

by JACK BLATHERWICK

Let's Play Hockey Columnist

In sixty years of coaching I've heard that competitive grit is the most important factor in success; or rink sense, stick skills, or skating. And I can't disagree with any of those viewpoints.

However, there is no improvement – no FUN – in any sport if there is no confidence. And, it is the hardest thing to coach, because it requires a certain level of success. So, why do we coaches work so darn hard to destroy confidence?

Why do we get angry? Does a math teacher get angry when a student makes a mistake? Is it necessary to correct each mistake more often than to reward small successes? Is patience the most important coaching skill in our profession?

And how about lack of effort, or the perception that effort is always the problem? Somehow, we feel totally justified to berate poor effort with the sharpest of insults. Stop. Think before acting. Is there a reason for a poor outcome, just as there might be in the classroom? Insults are not a constructive tool for a teacher, but tradition allows – actually expects – a coach to address poor results with the nastiest rant possible.

In a recent TV game in which one team gave up three goals in a period, the announcer declared the coach should go in the locker room and chew the team out for poor effort. Was it effort? The goaltender gave up three; none were his fault. The refs contributed; the coaches made some poor line-changes; team 'systems' didn't match the opposing offense; and the scoring plays were all TV highlights of the week – incred-



ible shots that squeaked in the corner where the crossbar meets the post – once in a career shots.

Nonetheless, the coach was expected to throw a fit between periods. It just had to be a lack of effort, because – well, because, “I’m mad.”

But what if we coached confidence with the same passion we bring to the rink for skating mechanics, or power play, or D-zone coverage? We watch NHL coaches pull the notebook out of their jacket pocket, and I wonder if any of them is making notes of a subtle good play that doesn't get noticed. Did

a defenseman finish a check or make a good breakout pass, but didn't get an assist? Did a forecheck create a turnover that doesn't lead to a goal, but could in the future?

Building confidence is a full-time coaching project. Every little step toward winning behavior is a gift, because those successes build confidence. Elite players have success automatically; this increases poise with the puck, and leads to more success.

But weaker players need to be rewarded when they do little things right, because they aren't capable, yet, of the automatic reward from scoring a highlight goal. This is where the truly great youth coaches earn their stripes – not winning championships.

Building confidence is a full-time coaching project. Every little step toward winning behavior is a gift, because those successes build confidence.

Carroll Goalie School helps goalies elevate their game to new levels

Evening and weekend clinics set for Minnesota and Iowa

The Carroll Goalie School is celebrating its 30th year of helping boys and girls achieve success between the pipes.

CGS gives goalies the attention they deserve to maximize development. They'll improve their individual skills, self-confidence and elevate their game to new levels in a challenging, upbeat and fun learning environment.

"Goalies who train with us work hard, improve their skills and have fun," said Edina, Minn. native Steve Carroll, a goalie development leader who coaches goalies at the youth, high school and college levels. "I'm extremely proud of the reputation we've earned for developing quality, fundamentally-sound goaltenders."

The CGS instructors use their extensive playing and coaching experience to teach the goalies what it takes to be successful. They are experts who also share their wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm for the goaltending position with the kids.

"The men and women on our coaching staff are passionate about goaltending and do an excellent job of explaining, demonstrating, and reinforcing the essential techniques used in today's game," Carroll said. "Our coaches help the goalies feel good about their game and feel good about themselves."

CGS clinics are conveniently scheduled on select evenings and weekends during June-September. Ice times are at six Minnesota arenas including Braemar Arena (Edina), Eagan Civic Arena (Eagan), Richfield Arena (Eagan), Sports Arena East, (Saug Rapids), Super Rink (Blaine), STMA Arena (St. Michael-Albertville).

In July, CGS will also host two clinics (Intermediate Skills and Advanced Skills) at the RecPlex in West Des Moines, Iowa.

CGS offers four programs for goalies ages 6-14 – Intro to Goaltending, Intermediate Skills, Advanced Skills, and Tryout Tune-up.

Goalie parents like the variety of programs CGS offers because they realize that having their kids train with Coach Carroll and his expert staff because they can have a significant impact on their development.

"Steve Carroll and his team are amazing! They have elevated my son's skills and fostered his love for the game



and being a goalie," said goalie parent Cecilia Teeuwen, Minneapolis, Minn. "The coaches that CGS has are the best in the business – they interact so well with the goalies, the students don't even realize how hard they are working," said goalie parent Bud Samms, from Cambridge, Iowa. "My son gains more in three, two-hour sessions than in any of the week-long camps he has attended."

Paul Zachery, goalie parent from Apple Valley, Minn. said "Our son has been attending the Carroll Goalie School for three years. The clinics are well designed and keep the players moving. The content is focused and the coaches aren't afraid to provide the appropriate instruction. We love these clinics and they have become the standard we hold other programs to."

COACH STEVE CARROLL

Coach Steve Carroll has more than 35 years of experience coaching goalies. He recently completed the USA Hockey Bronze Level Goalie Coach Education Course. Steve is a two-time NCAA Hockey National Champion, a two-time All-American goalie

and finalist for the Hobey Baker Award presented to the best player in men's college hockey. He's been inducted into the Edina High School and Minnesota State University, Mankato athletic halls of fame.

Registration is underway for the 2025 CGS summer and fall clinics. Learn more by visiting www.carrollgs.com

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Ryan Egan, Head Coach, Saint Mary's Men's Hockey



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Dryland training with speed

by SEAN SKAHAN

Let's Play Hockey Contributor

Many times while I am leaving the rink; I may see some young hockey teams doing their "dry land training" before their practice on the ice. I may see something that I think is really good where the coach actually put in some thought into a progressive session with the focus on helping the players get better in a fun environment. Unfortunately, and most of the time, I may see something that in my opinion, isn't beneficial at all for young hockey players. What is the good and what is the bad? To me, for a young player, they need to be having fun while working on the physical components that would help them become better athletes. Drills such as agilities, plyometrics, tag games, and speed drills that promote competitiveness and enjoyment should be what are most important. What I don't like to see are kids being told to take long runs around the block or the arena. Sometimes, and I still see this at much higher levels, I may see young players riding stationary bikes at a steady state pace for a long period of time. Ask yourself, how many marathon runners play hockey to help them get prepare for marathons? Or, does Lance Armstrong play hockey to prepare for the Tour de France? It makes no sense and unfortunately, in a lot of situations, today's training for hockey is done this way!

At a recent seminar that I attended, a speaker talked about an athlete's "speed window". He was quoting a researcher who is the world's expert on young athletes and the maturation process. What he said was that boys and girls have 2 windows of developing speed in their maturation. For



boys, the windows are ages 7-9 and 13-16. For girls, their windows are between 6-8 and 11-13. Basically, what he was saying was that during this time, to take advantage of this opportunity, kids should be doing athletic movements as fast and hard as possible. In relating this to hockey, it could mean sprinting and jumping while doing dry-land training, while also skating fast and shooting the puck as hard as they can on the ice. Usually, when I see these youngsters on these long, slow runs or rides, guess how old they are? They are usually between 11 and 13. They are training to be slow during the optimal time for developing speed.

It now makes even less sense to have these youngsters go out on these long distance runs or these long stationary bike rides to help them play in a game where speed is the most important factor. Some of the best quotes I have heard from some of the strength and conditioning coaches that I

have learned from include "Train Slow, Be Slow" and "Want to run fast then you better be running fast". (I think this would also apply to skating). Off-Ice training sessions and on-ice practices should always take this into consideration.

Sean Skahan

Sean is the owner of Skahan Sports Conditioning in Ham Lake, Minn. At Skahan Sports, he works with hockey players to increase their physical performance. He is a former NHL Strength and Conditioning Coach who worked with both the Minnesota Wild (2015-2022) and the Anaheim Ducks (2002-2015) – where he helped them win the Stanley Cup in 2007. Sean is also the host of the Total Hockey Training Podcast and the creator of Total Hockey Training which is his remote hockey strength and conditioning program. He also wrote the book Total Hockey Training which was published in 2015. To contact Sean, please go to www.SkahanSports.com

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Building an Explosive Start

by **ANDY NESS**

Let's Play Hockey Contributor

How does a skater become more explosive? There are certain on ice drills that can help any skater improve just this. I will explain a few drills that will help any skater become more explosive.

First, we should start with the skater over by the boards making sure he/she start a few feet away. The skater should then lean in to create the same angle that would take place when a skater is starting. One of the most important things a skater should remember is to turn their skates out so they are able to push against the ice. If their skates stay parallel, the skater will be pushing straight back on the flat of their blade, in a front to back running motion. This will not allow them to move forward. Explosiveness is created by force pushing against the ice to get the skater to move forward. Once a skater is in the proper position by the boards, he/she can drive the opposite knee up towards the boards. This will give the skater the idea of pushing the load skate against the ice while getting the other skate (foot) some distance. This simple step should be repeated using both the right and left skate.

My favorite drill in developing an explosive start is a drill we call the "net push". One person will provide resistance against the net while the skater will try to push the net with 3-5 explosive steps. Again, make sure your feet are turned out so can apply force to the ice. If the feet are parallel, the skater will "slip" while trying to move the net and end not being



able to move it at all. After 3-5 steps the skater should stop, load his/her feet again, and execute another quick start. This should be repeated for about 4-5 continuous reps up the ice. This drill will really get the skaters tired so make sure they are recovered before the next set. It is important to remember to lean into the net and not to bend at the waist.

Finally, for younger skaters anything to get them chasing something will give them the optimum body lean that we are looking for. That is why a simple game in which the coach drops his/her stick will force the skater to move out of their comfort zone. Not only do the kids love doing this but we are also working on them getting their feet moving faster than

they are used to. A coach can challenge the skater by backing up or having two skaters race each other to try to catch the stick.

Working on these drills will help develop the explosiveness every skater is looking for. It will take a lot of work, effort, and energy to develop an explosive start but can be done with the right technique.

Good luck.

Andy Ness is the head skating and skill coach for the Minnesota Wild. He has also been an assistant skating instructor for the New Jersey Devils, the University of Minnesota men's and women's hockey teams and the U.S. Women's Olympic Hockey Team.

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Girls U8-U14 | Boys U16-2016



ALEXANDRIA ICE BREAKER
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May 2-4 | Girls U10 & U12



MINNESOTA MELTDOWN
April 25-27 | Twin Cities
Boys 2017-2010 | Girls 10U-19U



FINNESOTA CUP
WEEK 1: May 1-4 | Girls 8U-12U
WEEK 2: May 8-11 | Girls 14U-19U
Twin Cities



SPRING STAMPEDE
May 9-11 | Twin Cities
Girls U8-U14 | Boys U16-2016



SHOCK DR SHOOTOUT
May 2-4 | Twin Cities
Boys 2017-2010



INDEPENDENT CLASSIC
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Boys 2017-2010 | Girls 8U-19U



RED RIVER RODEO
May 16-18, 2025 | Fargo, ND
Boys 2012-2015



SUMMER SHOWDOWN
June 6-8 | Twin Cities
Boys 2017-2010 | Girls 10U-19U



INTERNATIONAL CUP
August 1-3 | Twin Cities
Boys 2017-2010 | Girls 8U-19U



SUMMER KICKOFF
August 8-10 | Twin Cities
Boys 2017-2010 | Girls 10U-16U



SUMMER ROUND UP AA
August 22-24 | Twin Cities
Boys 2017-2010 | Girls 8U-14U
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EASTON CUP AAA
August 15-17 | Twin Cities
Boys 2017-2010 | Girls 10U-19U



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WARRIOR CUP AAA
September 5-7 | Twin Cities
Boys 2017-2010 | Girls 10U-14U



RIVALRY CUP GIRLS
November 21-23 | Blaine, MN
Girls U12-U15



WINTER SHOWDOWN
November 21-23 | Twin Cities
Girls 19U

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The overuse injury window for hockey players

by JOSH LEVINE

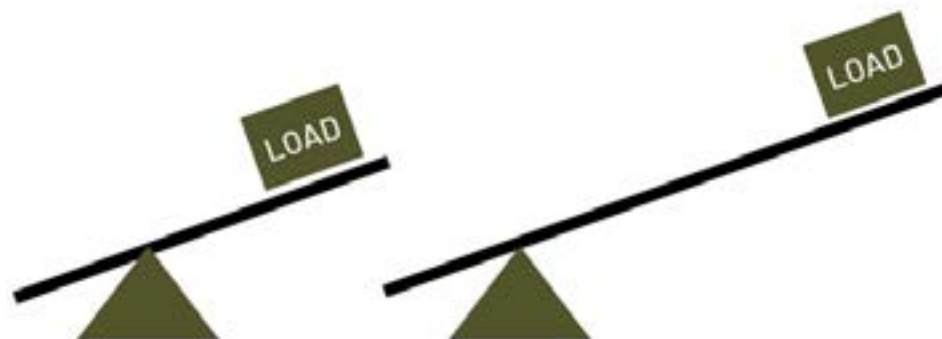
Let's Play Hockey Columnist

Training volumes for hockey athletes have increased significantly over the last few decades, with athletes specializing at younger and younger ages. Year-round training programs for hockey carry significant risks of overuse injuries at any age. However, there is a period of time when there appears to be heightened risk and parents should be aware so they can adjust their athlete's programming accordingly.

When athlete's go through peak height velocity (PHV) – in more common terms, a big growth spurt in the early to mid teenage years – the body does not grow in a balanced manner. The skeletal system takes off, but the muscular system is delayed, taking time to catch up. The limbs grow longer and with longer limbs there is greater potential to place increased pressure and stress on the joint. Think of your arms and legs as levers. A shorter lever with weight on the end will place less pressure on the joint than a longer one – the image here should help illustrate the point. Without stronger muscles to withstand the force, the pressure is then taken on by the joints and ligaments. This in turn can lead to stress fractures and other injuries. In hockey, we are commonly seeing L5 low back stress fractures, hip stress fractures and labral tearing, and groin strains. We could reduce the incidence of these injuries if we understood this overuse injury risk window.

The typical female athlete will hit

Athletes should undergo injury risk movement screens and their training programs should include prehab and mobility training.



PHV around 12.5 years old and the average male athlete will hit PHV around 14.5. At this point and for the next year or eighteen months, the muscular system will need time to catch up. During this period, athletes should have at least three months throughout the year where they are not skating. Too often, parents think that continuing significant skating volumes will not result in any adverse impacts. Their squirt and peewee skated all the time without issue, but then suddenly they find that their bantam player has a stress fracture. This logic and thinking has led to many low back stress fractures that likely could have been avoided. If you apply the same stimulus to the body consistently and throughout the year, the body will wear down and not be able to repair itself quick enough for the next time you apply the same stimulus. And if the stimulus (skating) now places greater pressures on the joints because the limbs are longer, it certainly makes sense to reduce training volumes!

In general, athletes should focus more on foundational strength training in the gym and less on hockey specific technical work. Building strength will help the athlete better cope with the demands of hockey when they need the strength the most! Athletes in the overuse injury

With the right knowledge and perspective, we can help reduce overuse injuries and help athletes stay in the game!

window are also at an age when shooting pucks provides a very high return on investment. Why not spend more time intentionally training (in the gym, shooting pucks, stickhandling) and less following the herd of insanity?

Finally, athletes should undergo injury risk movement screens and their training programs should include prehab and mobility training. Movement screens can help identify asymmetries in the body that if left unchecked raise the risk of injury. And prehab infused training programs will help preempt these common asymmetries by working on key muscles that when strengthened can help reduce injury risk.

With the right knowledge and perspective, we can help reduce overuse injuries and help athletes stay in the game!

If you'd like to learn more about injury prevention, movement screens, and prehab programming, please reach out to Josh Levine at josh@thefortisacademy.com

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SPRING DEVELOPMENT 2025

SPRING D



BODY CONTACT & CHECKING CLINICS

LEARN MORE



Body contact and checking clinics are primarily designed for players entering their first season of body checking, but all Pee wee and Bantam players are eligible to participate.

- Participants will receive 2 hours of on-ice professional instruction.
- Coaches will focus on developing key skills including angling, positioning, technique, awareness and many more.
- A maximum of 36 participants will be allowed at each location and will be filled on a first come, first serve basis.
- Each clinic will have up to four coaches on the ice, creating a low player to coach ratio that facilitates one-on-one interaction.

TGC 2025 SUMMER CAMPS

Goalie training for any level of experience!

Expert coaching to help you make the jump to the next level in your goaltending career.

BOARDING CAMPS

Stay at the beautiful campus of Shattuck St. Mary's for a week-long exclusive Private Lesson Camp! Goalties are pushed to their best as they concentrate on sound fundamentals and game situation drills. 1:1 and 2:1 ratios accepted.

FARIBAULT, MN (Shattuck St. Mary's)

June 15-20: All TGC Programs • Shooters

June 22-27: All TGC Programs • Shooters

DAY CAMPS

High-energy, fun, and educational day camps with low ratios.

FARIBAULT, MN (Shattuck St. Mary's)

June 15-20: All TGC Programs • Shooters

June 22-27: All TGC Programs • Shooters

August 4-8: All TGC Programs • Shooters

MANKATO, MN (All Seasons Arena)

July 7-11: All TGC Programs • Shooters

EAGAN, MN (Eagan Civic Center)

July 28-Aug. 1: All TGC Programs • Shooters

EXCLUSIVE TGC PROGRAMS

FUNDAMENTAL (1-3 yrs experience)

To build a strong goaltending foundation, you need to start with the fundamentals. Newer goalies will learn:

- effective positioning
- making correct movements in the crease
- save techniques

SITUATIONAL (4+ yrs experience)

Build from a strong foundation and apply the fundamentals to game situations. Intermediate goalies will:

- learn goaltender theories, styles, and techniques
- apply this knowledge to game scenarios

VERGE

Goaltenders who have mastered fundamental and situational programs and have the necessary enthusiasm for training are on the verge of greatness! Emerging goalies will:

- increase speed and performance
- improve technical execution
- work on mental control

PRODIGY

Midlet, high school, and junior level players who are ready for the next step need advanced preparation.

Advanced goalies will:

- engage in high-intensity game situation drills
- work on speed, agility, and reaction time
- practice with top-notch shooters



ABOUT TGC

Coach Christopher grew up playing youth and junior hockey in Calgary, AB. He founded The Goalie Club in 2007 and has been the goaltending coach for the 8 teams at Shattuck St. Mary's Prep School in Faribault, MN for the last 18 years. Together, they've captured 11 USA Hockey National Championships.

- With 15 years of coaching experience, Coach Chris has brought out the best in players from across the pros.
- College players: Minnesota State University Mankato (Team MVP & Senior Player-Achiever of the Year Award)
- Professional players: San Jose and United States
- Coaching: Minnesota State University, Shattuck St. Mary's, MHSAA, and youth leagues

ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDE

Ice time, video analysis, dryland training, classroom discussion, workbooks, journals, and evaluations.

Find out what elite goaltenders and parents are saying about TGC at thegoalieclub.com

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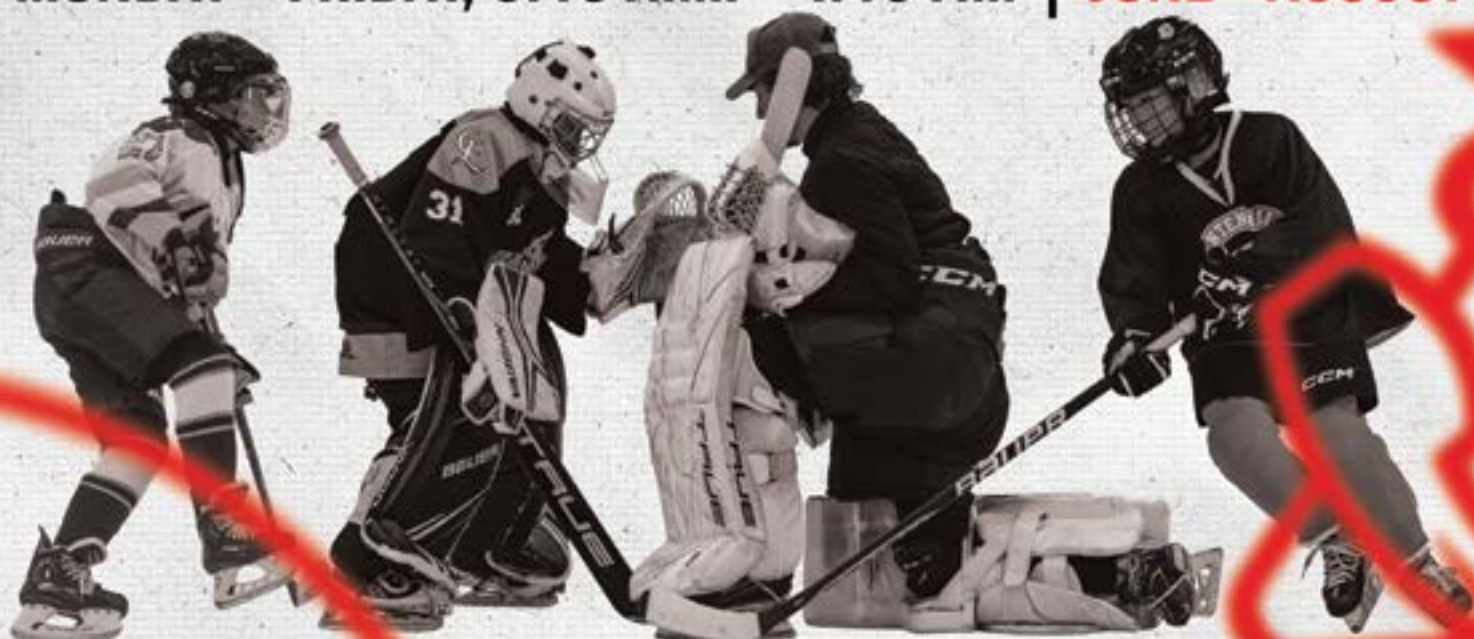
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