



HOCKEY PARENTS

Beyond the Bleachers: Connecting Families Beyond Their Clubs

Being a hockey parent can be one of the most incredible, rewarding, and emotionally exhausting experiences imaginable. One minute, you're celebrating an unforgettable moment on the ice, and the next, you're sitting in the bleachers during the semifinals of a tournament, your heart racing, your stomach in knots, and wondering if you're going to make it through the final few minutes without getting sick! Sometimes, all it takes is making eye contact with another parent to realize you're both feeling the exact same thing. No words needed. Just a nervous laugh and the unspoken understanding that you're both completely invested in this crazy hockey journey.

And that's just the excitement of the game itself!

Beyond that, between tryouts, team selections, playing time, coaching decisions, player development, and team dynamics, there are plenty of moments throughout a season when parents find themselves frustrated, confused, overwhelmed, or simply looking for answers.

The reality is that youth hockey is an emotional roller coaster, filled with incredible highs, difficult lows, and everything in between.

And sometimes, the hardest part isn't the situation itself. It's feeling like you have nobody to talk to who truly understands what you're going through.

That's why we created Beyond the Bleachers.

We want to provide hockey parents with something we believe has been missing from the youth hockey experience: a welcoming, supportive community where they can have honest conversations, feel heard, gain perspective, and build meaningful relationships with other families throughout Colorado.

You're Not Alone in This Hockey Journey

One of the most powerful aspects of *Beyond the Bleachers* is the opportunity to connect with hockey families from different organizations. Youth hockey can sometimes feel like a small world confined to our own teams and clubs. When challenges arise, it's easy to feel isolated or convinced that our experiences are unique to our organization.

But what if they're not?

What if a parent from another club is navigating the exact same concerns about coaching, communication, playing time, development, or team dynamics? These connections can help families recognize that many of the challenges they face aren't necessarily unique to their program. They're often shared experiences throughout the youth hockey community.

Sometimes, the grass isn't necessarily greener at another club. It's simply a different shade of green with some of the same challenges. By bringing families together across organizational lines, we create opportunities for honest conversations, fresh perspectives, meaningful friendships, and valuable networking. Parents can share experiences, learn from one another, and build a support system that extends beyond their own team, club, or hockey season.

Different clubs. Different jerseys. Shared experiences.

A Place to Feel Heard, Understood, and Supported

Sometimes parents don't need someone to immediately solve their problem. They simply need someone to listen. *Beyond the Bleachers* provides an opportunity to openly discuss the challenges of youth hockey without feeling judged or dismissed. Whether you're frustrated with a coaching decision, concerned about your child's development, or simply navigating the emotional demands of the season, your experiences deserve to be heard.

Feeling validated doesn't necessarily mean someone agrees with everything you're saying. It means your feelings and experiences are being acknowledged and respected.

And when people feel heard and understood, something powerful can happen. Trust begins to develop, defenses naturally come down, and people become more open to considering perspectives they may not have previously considered.

Honest Conversations. Different Perspectives. Meaningful Growth.

What makes *Beyond the Bleachers* especially valuable is the opportunity to hear different perspectives from two people who understand youth hockey from different angles.

Kyle brings an honest, firsthand coaching perspective, helping parents better understand the decisions, challenges, expectations, and realities coaches navigate throughout a hockey season. His goal isn't to defend every coaching decision, but to offer transparency and insight into how coaches think, communicate, and approach player development.

Coach Art Burns brings a unique combination of mental skills coaching expertise and firsthand experience as a hockey parent. He understands the emotional investment parents have in their children's hockey journeys while offering valuable strategies for managing frustration, expectations, confidence, communication, and the mental challenges that come with youth sports.

Together, these perspectives can help parents look at difficult situations through a different lens. Sometimes, hearing how a coach views a situation can completely change how a parent

interprets it. Other times, understanding the emotional side of an experience can help a parent respond with greater patience, confidence, and clarity.

We're not here to tell parents they're right or wrong. We're here to help them feel understood, explore different perspectives, and become better equipped to navigate the challenges of a long hockey season.

A Healthier Way to Navigate the Hockey Season

Youth hockey can be stressful, but how we process that stress, communicate our frustrations, and respond to difficult situations can have an enormous impact on our experience and, more importantly, our children's experience.

Our goal isn't to eliminate every frustration or disagreement. It's to create a healthy, constructive environment where parents can talk through challenges, gain valuable insights, build relationships, and discover better ways to navigate the ups and downs of the season.

Beyond the Bleachers isn't about comparing clubs, criticizing coaches, or deciding who's right or wrong. It's about connection, understanding, and recognizing that we all have something to learn from one another.

You may come to *Beyond the Bleachers* because of a challenge you're facing with hockey. But our hope is that you leave with something much more valuable: connection, understanding, perspective, and a community you can lean on throughout the season.

Because when parents feel heard, supported, and better equipped to handle challenges, they're in a stronger position to create positive experiences for their children.

And at the end of the day, that's what matters most.

Different jerseys. Shared experiences. One hockey community.

Beyond the Bleachers - Changing the culture of youth hockey, one conversation at a time.