

Welcome to the 2023-2024 Hockey Season!  My name is Justin Nistico and I’m honored to have been chosen to be the Head Coach of the U12 AA Kanata Blazers.

I have been involved in Hockey in a variety of roles over the past 20 years.  I have been lucky enough to have coached 10+ years at the JR A level both as a Head Coach and Assistant Coach role.  I have also coached in the KMHA house league programs.  I had the privilege of coaching for 6 weeks in Beijing, China as well as working with the same group when they traveled to Canada.

Philosophy

My coaching philosophy is to provide a safe environment to enable athletes to have fun, be competitive as a team, while learning the fundamental skills needed to compete, succeed and enjoy hockey at a high level for a long time.   The goal is to get better every day as a team and as individuals.

Rules for the team will be discussed at a parent meeting at the beginning of the season, however, here are a few basic ones:

* Have fun and compete hard
* Listen, be respectful to everyone on and off the ice
* Arrive 30 minutes before practice  (ready 10 minutes before ice time)
* Arrive an hour before games (ready 10 minutes before ice time)
* Everything we to do is Team First

Practices will be high tempo, a lot of flow and high compete.  There will be a lot of information with a lot of instruction for the athletes to learn and apply.  My coaching style is fair but demanding and high intensity.  I will never ask an athlete to do something I do not think they can do and I will be constantly coaching/correcting them with feedback both constructive and positive.

Evaluations and Try outs

I will be looking for strong skaters.  Players that compete at all times (practices and games).  Athletes that can play a team game (moves puck, supports line mates).  High hockey IQ/hockey sense will also be evaluated as well as attitude/body language during drills and on bench.  Highly focused players are required to play at this level.  The evaluating will be based on performance on ice during practices/inter squad games and exhibition games.  There will be all non-parent evaluators.   Try out schedule will be posted on the KMHA website ([http://kmha.ca](http://kmha.ca/)) later this summer.

Season Plan

Our schedule will be very busy with high paced practices with a focus on individual skill and team tactics. The time commitment for all players and parents is roughly 4-5 times a week on average, comprising of 1-2 games, 2-3 practices.  The team will be doing dryland once per week, schedule permitting.  Seeing that this is a competitive program all team scheduled events will be mandatory, with some exceptions that will be discussed at a parent meeting.  Financial commitment per player will be approximately $1,600- $2,000 for the year (on top of the KMHA registration and tryout fees).  We will be looking at fundraising/sponsorship to help assist with these costs.

The team will be participating in 4 tournaments over the course of the season (2 local and 2 away). There is a possibility of a third out of town tournament to replace one of the in-town tournaments due to in-town tournament availability. The proposed tournament listing and schedule is as follows:

Belleville Pre Season Tilt                                               Sept. 29 - Oct 1st, 2023

Paul Coffey International (Mississauga)                        Dec 1st - Dec 3rd, 2023

Bell Capital Cup                                                             Dec 27th - Jan 1st 2024

18th Annual Capital Winter Classic (Sensplex)             Jan 19th - Jan 21st, 2024

I am extremely excited to get started and I understand the responsibilities that come with being a head coach in a competitive environment.  I will give all my spare time to making sure that we have a successful season and making sure the athletes have fun, learn a lot, develop and most importantly accomplish the goals that they set forth.  I will be looking for the same 100% commitment from each family and player to help have a successful season for everyone involved.  Enjoy your summer and see you all at the rink.

Justin Nistico

Head Coach

Kanata Blazers U12 AA