

## Get In The Game

by Peggy McColl

Last week my 11 year old son Michel and I (along with his hockey team and their families) drove to Quebec City for an Atom BB hockey tournament. (My son Michel has been playing hockey in a league since he was 5 years old.) It is a common occurrence for Michel's team to place second when they play a match against another hockey team (that is a positive way of saying "they usually lose"). Regardless of the outcome of the team's games, these 10 and 11 year olds remind me of one of the most important fundamentals to goal achieving: "When you are on the ice - get in the game".

Here is an overview of the timing for the games at this level in hockey: the game is 3 periods, 12 minutes for each period, and with 15 players on the team and 5 players on the ice at any one time (assuming no penalties), each player is on the ice, on average, one minute and on the bench for two minutes and rotate for the length of the game. Therefore, for a 12 minute period, each player averages 4 minutes of "ice-time". Even though the total game time played is 36 minutes, the players actually only play 12 minutes per game.

When it is time for those little hockey players to get on the ice, they put their hearts and souls into their shift. There have been times when these little guys haven't been feeling 100%, or they may have been tired, or were feeling a little disillusioned, but when they skate out onto the ice, a transformation occurs. For the most part, they remind me to give it my best shot when I'm "in the game", regardless of the desired outcome. They also remind me that we don't have to be "on" all of the time. And, even though we are a member of the team, and we may not be on the ice during the entire game, we can sit on the sidelines watching the others, and learn from them. The Coaches on Michel's team provides feedback to the players on the bench during the game, showing them what their other team members are doing well, or could be doing better, reminding them of their potential and encouraging them to go right back out there and give it their best.

When Michel first started playing hockey at the age of 5 he had no concept of "getting in the game". When it was time for Michel's shift on the ice, he would saunter onto the ice, skate around looking at the people in the stands with curiosity and search for the zamboni (his favorite part of the game). He reminded me of a little innocent child out for a casual skate on a sunny day, not a hockey player in a competitive league. His early hockey performance was humorous and his non-challant attitude always brought a smile to my face. At 5 years of age, hockey wasn't serious competition. However, as the hockey players get older, in competitive hockey, it is different and the players are required to "get in the game" when it is time for them to play their shift. This is a skill they learn at a young age and continue to improve as they get older.

Michel and his teammates would love to win their hockey games and bring home the tournament trophy, but as the ole cliché goes "it's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game". Michel's team, in spite of losing the majority of their games,

continue to outperform from their previous game(s). It is apparent, all of the players have improved (and continue to improve) on a weekly basis. These kids are flexible. They are willing to play different positions, if needed. They are willing to try different lines, if the coach believes it will help the team. They fill in when one of their team mates is on the injury list or absent from the game.

On every team there are also the over-achievers. You've seen them. These are the kids who seem to come out of nowhere and, even though they are playing the position of a Forward, they perform defensive moves that stop the puck from going in the net. They skate faster. They try harder and they push beyond their normal comfort zones. These players demonstrate a hunger and eagerness to score a goal and it shows.

Whether they realize it or not, whether they are winning or not, these kids are learning valuable life lessons playing the sport of hockey. They are also reminding the parents in the stands of these valuable life lessons.

What about you? When it is time to "get in the game" are you following through? Do you consistently perform better? When you are on the sidelines are you still learning? Are you overcompensating when one of your "team players" isn't feeling 100%? Are you one of the over-achievers?

When you "get in the game" you'll receive a tremendous amount of satisfaction, and you and your team will be better off because of it.

Peggy McColl

Author of:

On Being...The Creator of Your Destiny

The 8 Proven Secrets to SMART Success

On Being a Dog with a Bone

<http://www.destinies.com>