

HOCKEY MOM COLUMN

## A WORD TO THE WISE; WISELY CHOOSE YOUR WORDS

BY CHRISTIE CASCIANO BURNS

» Earlier this season, Joel Quenneville became the second-winningest coach in NHL history. Only Scotty Bowman has stood behind the bench and won more hockey games.

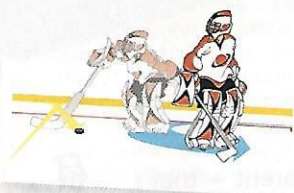
These two coaching icons have won so many times that they make it look easy. But as the old proverb goes, every journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step. Even the most established coach had to start somewhere, learning valuable lessons along the way.

Sometimes we as parents don't take the time to walk a mile in our coaches' shoes. We can forget that they are people too – with lives outside of the rink, with closets that hold more than a few Bauer warm-up suits. We sometimes forget that they are giving of themselves to coach our sons and daughters, to impart life lessons that will last long after they leave the rink. And sometimes we forget that they are human beings.

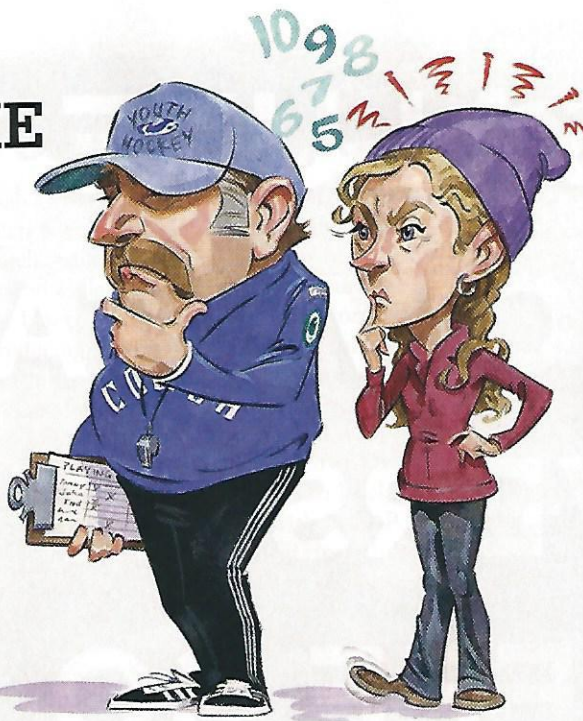
We need to remember those things the next time we get frustrated with our child's ice time, or how a game or even a season shakes out. Sometimes we just need to let a little time pass to reflect on a situation and try to see it from another perspective.

YOU MAKE THE CALL

The Jaguars shoot the puck from behind the center red line, down the ice and toward the end boards. The Wolfpack goalkeeper moves toward the puck, but chooses not to play it. Is icing still in effect?



ANSWER: Yes. Goalkeepers at the youth level are not required to play the puck during an icing situation.



When challenging a coach, Cicero, N.Y., hockey dad Pete Ludden uses the 24-hour rule. If something happens during a game that he thinks needs to be addressed, he'll wait at least until the next day before bringing it up.

"It gives the person time to think about what they want to say, how they want to say it and if it's necessary to say it at all," he says.

We all love our kids, and will do anything to protect them from what we see as life's injustices. If you feel the coach isn't in tune with how all of his players are feeling, consider some diplomacy when it comes time to speak up.

Sometimes it may be better to empower your child to take the lead. That's what Monica Headley did when her son felt that he was

getting cheated out of playing time. This hockey mom from Mead, Wash., encouraged him to speak up for himself.

"My son is a kid who doesn't talk much. He worked up the nerve to talk to the head coach about not being on penalty kills," Headley says.

It turns out the coach didn't have a reason and apologized for the oversight. Headley says her son felt empowered because he took matters into his own hands when it came to his ice time.

It's also important to consider that any interaction you have with the coach, no matter how well meaning, could potentially impact your child. After all, no child wants to have the reputation on the team as having one of "those parents."

So the next time parental instincts tell you to call out the coach, make sure it's the right call. As Joel Quenneville once said, "You get rewarded when you do a lot of things right."

Syracuse, N.Y., hockey mom Christie Casciano Burns is the author of *The Puck Hog & Haunted Hockey* in Lake Placid, available on [TotalHockey.com](http://TotalHockey.com).

COACH OF THE MONTH



### Craig Shepherd

Age 49  
Prior Lake, Minn.

→ As a USA Hockey Level 4 coach with 21 years of experience and a National Strength and Conditioning Association Certified Strength and Conditioning specialist, there's no doubt that Craig Shepherd brings impressive credentials to his role as a coach with the Bloomington Jefferson Girls Hockey Team.

Add in the fact that he holds the distinction of being the first ever non-Russian player to play with Dynamo Moscow in the former Soviet Elite League and you have a man who has been there and done that in the sport. Based on his time in Russia, Craig has incorporated many of the ideas and philosophies he learned and further developed in coaching and is passing them on to the Jefferson girls' squad.

"My job as an educator is to instill in my players the right core values; and in doing so to ensure success in their lives after they are done playing hockey," he says. "I know that by instilling these core values into my players, not only will they become better people, but success on the ice will follow as well."

When he's not on the ice, Craig is a commercial helicopter pilot and a certified flight instructor. He has also served as a volunteer and motivational speaker for organizations such as the United Way, Feed My Starving Children, Special Olympics and Big Brothers.