

New Age Training (NAT)

Hello West Niagara parents, grandparents, siblings and hockey fans

If you haven't already heard you will soon see our new approach to player and team development. With the pandemic happening shortly after our amalgamation it impeded our ability to put a player and coach development program in place. We have taken steps to make up for lost time. We are extremely fortunate to have secured the services and technical brilliance of one of hockey's best player and coach mentors. Dan Poliziani is a former player, captain and coach of the Yale Bulldogs, Head Coach of the Ontario U17 team and current Associate Coach at York University. Dan has already met with our coaches and introduced our club to a program he has been working on for more than 15 years to help improve and expedite player development. How players learn and how they build confidence through what Dan refers to as "Play-Practice Methodology and Game Sense Training". In essence, it's a development program based on multi-tasking and giving the game back to the players. Dan will meet with us monthly and is supported by our newly formed hockey development committee.

You will see our coaches shrink the rink intentionally far more frequently as we work to recreate parts of the game and work on their skills simultaneously. The game is chaotic and crowded on the ice so we will train our players to get accustomed to it during our training sessions. We often refer to this method as small area training.

There will be less coaching on the ice with our players being encouraged to be creative and not be afraid to make mistakes. We need to improve our players puck handling ability under pressure and in a crowded environment so we can help them develop their poise. Parents/Grandparents - This is where we ask for your patience and support. We love when you support and encourage our players on to victory; however, we also ask that you refrain from giving specific directions to players on the ice that may contradict our coaches efforts. We don't want to train our players to "listen and do" but to "anticipate, read and react"! We want them to experiment and learn from their mistakes. We will provide direction and the parameters to which they explore. Defensively, we will be more structured. Offensively, our goal is to work as a team but also with more freedom to try things. Some that may cost us the odd goal against or even a regular season win. We will work on good game habits and collectively as a club focus more on the process where winning becomes the bi-product of our efforts. Some players and some teams will excel faster than others. Most of our drills will be common among all teams and will be named. Our structure, concepts and rules of thumb training will be more coordinated. We will make better use of our AP system and limit stoppages during training time so players can spend more time working on their skills/game. We want our players to be as excited to come to practice as they are to games. We are confident that over time our players, our teams and our club will benefit from our New Age Training program.

Hockey Development Committee