



Ottawa West Golden Knights U15 Coaches Welcome Letter

Hello all prospective U15 Players and Families, my name is Jason Pottie and I am excited to be back with Ottawa West Golden Knights as the Head Coach for this year's U15 hockey team.

As many of you may know, I have spent the last 10 years as a hockey coach, coaching teams within both the West End Hockey League and more recently, coaching competitive level teams with the OWGK Minor Hockey Association. As head coach with the Golden Knights, my focus has always been about helping create memorable experiences with players, parents and our community, and the importance of hard work, commitment and a positive attitude to achieve successes both on and off the ice. Rest assured I am once again well prepared and looking forward to new challenges, opportunities, growth and fun that lie ahead with this year's U15 team.

Sports care an integral part of my life and community involvement here in Ottawa, and I continue to enjoy playing and coaching sports at many levels. I have had the opportunity to coach many teams and athletes of all ages during my career and have a very consistent rapport with parents and players for being fair, transparent and committed to their development as great athletes, leaders and role models in our community. I have been fortunate to share the ice, the field, bench and sidelines with many fantastic athletes, coaches and parents who have helped shape my experiences, learning and passion for sports. These experiences continue to motivate me to play a leadership role in sports, develop our youth both on and off the playing field, and foster a challenging, exciting, fun and inclusive environment for everyone involved.

Coaching Philosophy and Approach

My coaching philosophy continues to evolve with my own coaching development and experiences. That said, my philosophy in general has always centered around community (player-parent-coaches) collaboration and commitment to foster a safe, positive and inclusive environment for kids and families to learn, develop and grow their overall interest in the sport of hockey.

Specifically, I focus on;

- Development as a shared responsibility and team commitment, where we must work hard together (coaches, athletes and parents) to improve our overall fitness (hockey skills, mental skills, nutrition) to achieve the best outcomes possible.
- Discipline, respect and sportsmanship (Teammates, Opponents, Coaches, Officials, etc.) as paramount to developing individual character and strong team culture.
- Creating an environment and opportunities where players are also leaders, by helping them understand their role and responsibilities as part of a team, how to support each other and hold each other accountable.

- Translating experience and lessons learned as part of the game of hockey into life skills they can apply outside of the rink.
- Find satisfaction and enjoyment in the process and focus on what we can control, celebrate the small victories along the way as opposed to only the final outcome

I want to create experiences and teaching moments in hockey that can translate to life skills and lessons applied outside the rink, like the rewards of hard work and commitment regardless of results, importance of personal and team accountability, dealing with and overcoming adversity, teamwork, leadership and respect.

Team Commitment and Parent/Player Expectations

As you may be aware, with a competitive team, more is expected of the coaches and players. I will always do my best to be as efficient as possible with maximizing development while minimizing weekly commitment (i.e. doing more things in one day as opposed to multiple days). Our commitments will include roughly the following;

- 2-3 hours (~2 days) of on ice practice a week (includes both Knights allocation and extra Ice/Clinics as planned)
- 1 hour of dryland training per week (Conditioning, Agility, Strength)
- 2 games per week (sometimes adjusted to accommodate tournaments)
- 4 Planned Tournaments including;
 - o Capital Blues Hockey Fest (Ottawa, ON) – September 26-28
 - o Glancaster Bombers Veterans Memorial Tournament (Ancaster, ON) – November 7-9
 - o CoCo Lemay Tournament (Clarence-Rockland, ON)– December 5-7
 - o Dunsmuir Memorial Tournament (East Gwillimbury , ON) - January 29-Feb 1
- Regular Online Hockey Training Video and Analysis throughout the Season
- Family and Team Building Events

Regarding Team finances, Golden Knights has always provided the most competitive costs in the league, and I will continue to keep the same commitment for this team as previous years, which is approximately \$800 in addition to all league fees. This amount could fluctuate slightly, depending on the tournament/extra ice situations, fundraising and any sponsorships. I will provide more details as we finalize the team and plans for the season and am always open to find ways to work with families who have financial constraints.

Players, with the support of their families, will be expected to meet all team commitments, as well as follow practice, pre-game and post-game expectations (team dress code, arrival times, pre and post ice preparations and debriefs). These will be outlined further at the Parent and Player Season Kick-off Meeting after the team is selected. I am a big supporter of multi-sport athletes and will always find ways to work with players and parents to find flexible arrangements for them to continue to play multi-sports while meeting key hockey team commitments.

Parent and Player expectations with Ottawa West Golden Knights will align with the association's values, policies and my coaching philosophy as outlined above. From a weekly perspective, this means;

- With parental support, players review the practice/game plans I provide and be ready with your gear so parents can get you to the rink or other events on time.
- Parents ensure that their player arrives on time, are well fueled, rested and ready to perform at their best every time.
- Everyone maintains a positive attitude on and off the ice, listens to direction and feedback, encourages open and active communication, and gives 100% every time.
- There is a showing of continual respect for coaches, volunteers, teammates and opponents.

OWGK Player Profile and Evaluations

The foundation of a competitive hockey player is strong skating skills, good puck handling and shooting abilities, physicality, teamwork and consistent effort. At the U15 competitive level, these skills and attributes should already be in place and easily demonstrated. Equally important is the competitive players' understanding of the game or Hockey IQ, this includes awareness and smart/quick decision making on and off the puck. Coaches look for skilled players who are motivated to work, take direction and execute well, and have the mental strength to push themselves for the betterment of the team and not the individual..

U15 competitive tryouts will evaluate players abilities to demonstrate foundational requirements, enhanced skills, and physical and mental abilities in a game-like environment. The goal is to build a competitive team that is fast and agile, physical and relentless, works hard and works together, where players contribute both offensively and defensively regardless of position, and respect and learn from each other. We want to be known as a team that is tough to play against, a team with no quit, and plays with confidence and focus from the drop of the puck to the final buzzer.

During U15 tryouts, I will be assisted by a number of non-parent-of-player evaluators whom I've coached with or whom have coached competitive hockey. While I plan to oversee the evaluation sessions, I defer primarily to the evaluators to do the actual assessment of players performance, and document and rank their results during the tryouts. Rest assured that these evaluators will provide objective and detailed feedback that I can brief you on post tryouts. Tryouts for U15 may include a session on small area skills games, but will primarily be conducted via both intra-squad games and exhibition games against other teams.

We will be selecting 15 skaters (9 forwards/6 defense), 2 goalies and potentially 3-4 affiliates that will have the opportunity to practice and play with the core team.

All players including goalies from any level are welcome to try out for the team and are guaranteed a minimum two hours of evaluation time before any releases. If you were a strong player or goalie with your house league or previous competitive teams, we would love to have you come out! The U15 team roster will be finalized and communicated a few days following the end of tryouts and the selected team will then head into training camp the weekend that follows.

Registration is now open via the OWGK website (<http://owgkhockey.org/index.php>) and as always, it is important that everyone take advantage of the OWGK pre-tryout conditioning and contact camp the week before evaluations. I realize summer is tough to think about

hockey but for competitive tryouts, do not wait until the end of August for your player to get ready! Pre-tryout conditioning is expected to start right after Labor Day and then move directly into tryouts so we want them ready to bring their best to Ottawa West Golden Knights!

If you have any questions about the upcoming tryout or the season to follow, please feel free to reach out to me at jpottie@hotmail.com

I look forward to seeing everyone at the rink!

Jason Pottie
Head Coach – U15 Ottawa West Golden Knights