

## ***How to Impress Your Coach At Tryouts***

By: Roger Neilson

Hometown Hockey – Fall 2001 Edition

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It's that time of year again – preseason tryouts. Whether you are a returning “veteran” or a “rookie” tryout, this is an important time for you. Coaches know that many young players make huge gains in their development from one season to the next. Certain players suddenly emerge as team leaders. Will you be one of these players? Coaches are always looking for unexpected talent to surprise them. Could this be you? Whatever the situation, here are some tips to help you be at your best for the preseason practices and games.

### ***1. Be Prepared***

Be prepared for each practice or game. Check your equipment to see that everything is in order – skates sharpened, sticks taped, all accessories included. You don't want any distractions once you are at the arena. Be in the dressing room early. *Show everyone that you are ready.*

### ***2. Be Alert***

Listen carefully to your coaches. Watch the drills closely. Figure out the purpose of each drill. Coaches like alert players who are focused on the job at hand. *During games, notice everything that is happening.* Players on the bench can be a big help to players on the ice.

### ***3. Give Your Best Effort***

While skill is obviously important, a hard working player always catches the coach's eye. Be the hardest worker every time you are on the ice. *Hard workers never give up in any situation.*

### ***4. Always Bounce Back Strongly***

Coaches like to observe a player's reaction after a bad play – a forward misses a breakaway pass, a defenceman gets deked, a goaltender allows a soft goal. How does the player react? Coaches notice the players who bounce back after a missed assignment. It's the sign of a strong character.

### ***5. Be A Team Player***

It's great to see young players who are concerned about their teammates. In fact, it's great at any level, even in the NHL! A pat on the back to a teammate on the bench, a tap on your goaltender's pads at a faceoff, a word of encouragement to an incoming player at a change – these are indications to a coach that you are a good team player.

### **Special Tips**

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### ***To The Returning Veteran***

1. Give your best effort during the preseason even though you are assured of a position on the team.
2. Show your coaches and teammates that you intend to be a leader this season.
3. Never “coast” during tryouts. This is unfair to teammates who are battling to make the team.
4. Remember to always support your teammates on and off the ice.

### ***To The “Rookie”***

1. You need to make an “impression” on your coaches quickly.
2. Work hard – Battle at every opportunity. Whatever your strengths are, be sure to demonstrate them.
3. Be alert, enthusiastic and a good team player.
4. Without being a nuisance, ask the coach for instructions – for example, where he wants you to be at a faceoff. Show the coach you are eager to learn.

Good luck to all of you. I sure hope you have lots of fun this season...and don't forget to cheer for the Senators once in a while!

Your friend,

Roger Neilson

Be sure to check our website ([www.rogerneilsonshockey.com](http://www.rogerneilsonshockey.com)) for weekly playing and coaching tips beginning October 1, 2001.