

Dear Parents & Players,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 hockey season! My name is Brendan Spooner and I am excited to be the coach for this year's U11 Crusaders team. I have a deep passion for the game, have played at various competitive levels throughout minor hockey, continue to play recreationally, and have been actively involved in coaching within Ottawa minor hockey associations since 2005. Starting as a non-parent coach with AA and A teams, I have been involved with multiple age levels from IP to U16, competitive and house, in various coaching capacities. I have had the privilege to be part of some great teams, have learned from many great coaches, and continue to be a student of the game.

My primary goal for any team is to develop players to their maximum potential both on and off the ice. In addition to developing technical skills and game play, life skills of teamwork, responsibility, communication and respect will be stressed. Knowing that the game is a journey and just as much about friendships, embracing adversity, teamwork, success and failure...it's all a part of life, even when we exit the game. The combination of these will lead to building self-confidence and having fun, both as a group and individually.

Coaching Philosophy

My approach to coaching is built around four pillars:

Defence - I believe in building from the net out and establishing a team commitment to defence

Dedication - I believe in commitment to hard work, respect and always giving your full effort

Desire - We need to want the puck and want to compete every time we step on the ice

Development - All players and coaches will make mistakes, it's part of the learning process. It is how we learn from these mistakes that will define our season.

About The Season

Every new season brings its own set of challenges and opportunities, and coming off our first season playing full-ice hockey, the potential for both individual and team growth is tremendous.

To set the stage for a successful season, we'll place a strong early emphasis on core skill development—particularly skating, passing, and shooting—as these remain the foundation of our game. As the season progresses, we'll layer in more advanced tactics and team strategies to support our players' continued growth.

If you're playing U11 hockey in WCMHA, I strongly encourage you to register and bring your best to tryouts—there are several roster spots open and plenty of opportunity to compete.

Tournaments

The team has entered into 4 tournaments this year:

- Coco Lemay (Rockland), Oct 10-12
- Northumberland Silver Stick, Nov 21-23
- Capital Winter Classic (Sensplex), Jan 16-18
- Ajax Spring Thaw, Mar 27-29

I hope you all have a great summer and will see you at the rink soon enough!

Coach Brendan

