

Best Practices & Procedures for Changing Coaches

Requesting a coaching change can often come as a surprise to the current coach as well as others at the rink. There is an expectation that a skater will stay with their primary coach for the duration of the skating journey.

Often a coaching change may be negatively perceived by others and can harm the former coach's reputation. It's possible that the new coach may be perceived as "poaching skaters" and can lose their teaching privileges due to unethical behavior.

Therefore, making a coaching change is typically only done when there are scheduling conflicts, there is an issue with the coach that cannot be resolved, the coach retires or moves, or the skater moves to another area or rink. The decision to change coaches should not be made on a whim or to "change things up."

Changing coaches is stressful and can be disruptive to the skater as well as both the current and former coach. Sometimes, there is a difference in technique that requires relearning elements.

When there is absolutely no way to resolve a situation and a coaching change is necessary, its best to make the change ***before the start of a new season to limit any scheduling issues.***

Following these steps will facilitate a comfortable relationship within the rink for all parties:

Best Practices for Parents:

1. Contact your current coach and express your reasons for wanting to switch to another coach. There may be a way to correct the situation, and the need to switch could be resolved before a change is necessary.
2. Ensure you have paid your account balance in full with your current coach.
3. The last step should be to discuss this change with your child. Please make sure they are comfortable with the changes before you finalize anything.
4. When all resources are exhausted and the decision is made, making changes in the off-season is best to minimize disruption. This facilitates better season planning and scheduling for all involved parties.

Best Practices for Coaches:

1. Direct the prospective client to follow the steps in the best practices for parents (above).
2. Contact the current coach as a professional courtesy. Ensure that there is no possible resolution to the situation.
3. Confirm that all outstanding balances are paid in full with the current coach before scheduling any lessons. Lessons should not be provided before receiving confirmation of account status.
4. Respect what the former coach has done for the skater. If changes need to be made to the technique, do so without degrading the former coach's method.
5. Support your fellow coaches and refrain from judgment when coaching changes are made.

Best Practices for Skaters:

1. When the above procedures are followed, switching coaches should not affect the skater's relationship with other skaters (except regarding working in groups).
2. Do not isolate or make an outcast of a skater who has switched from your coach to another.
3. Do not encourage others to switch from their current coach.
4. Treat all skaters and coaches with equal respect.