Lesson #8 – Play through the Politics

I guess for parents this lesson should be called, “Enjoy the game in spite of the politics.” There are politics in everything we do as we get older. Hockey is another great way to show our kids how to deal with them before they move into adulthood. I've heard many people say that hockey is so political, but I think if you asked a dance mom, soccer dad, or a parent of a kid trying to get the lead role in the school play, they'd all agree that somehow, they felt politics were involved.

I’ve spent so much time talking about the mistakes I made as a parent and how hockey parents need to try and be better. This video highlights a story of how a coach had a “win at all cost” mentality and tried to manipulate a situation to improve his own team.

In last week’s video Brock tells the story of a coach that had a win at all costs mentality. Brock was trying out for AAA in his draft year and my husband was no longer coaching him. He had coached him for many years and had been asked several times to come back to coaching. Once Brock was playing at a higher level he felt it was better to be a spectator. The REP team was looking for a coach that year and one of the coaches from REP wanted him to join him on the bench. He proceeded to call the coach of the AAA team to tell him to cut Brock so that his Dad would come back to coaching the REP team and Brock would be their goalie. In the end, the AAA coach didn’t listen to this gentlemen and Brock made the team on his own. I have never been able to put a good spin on this situation. As I sat and listened to Brock’s take on the whole thing, I was so proud when I heard him say, “When it comes to politics, the hockey player needs to remember to just play through it. The hockey world should be evaluated on what you do on the ice and how good of a person you are off of it. Make sure you do everything on the ice, you work hard, play your best and I think that is where the evaluation is going to come into play."

There are many cases that coaches need to be better. Don’t get me wrong, I’m so thankful that we have people willing to volunteer their time. My husband has done it for years and most parents have no idea what goes into coaching. All of that said coaches need to remember that just because they are volunteers; it doesn’t excuse them from bad behaviour.

We asked former NHL player Kirk MacLean if he had ever come across these kinds of politics in his Minor Hockey career and he said, “I know when I was growing up some organizations would try to lure players from their district possibly promising them bikes or tv’s or whatever it may be.”

I think we need to remember that in life there is the possibility of a situation where a boss, a teacher, or a coach doesn’t have our best intentions at heart.

As I mention in the book, this was a lesson I struggled with. This is what I wrote about politics, an excerpt from Lesson Eight (8) …

*"As you navigate your way through this hockey experience, you will soon learn that there are decisions being made for your child that you have no control over, so let them go. Always bring your children back to the purity of the sport. Teach them to play through the politics...play in spite of them and the rest will fall into place."*

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Stay tuned for the next video in the series, “Your dreams shouldn’t cost your integrity.”

If you would like to learn more about the video series or purchase the book visit [www.lessonsfrombehindtheglass.com](http://www.lessonsfrombehindtheglass.com).