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It?s playoff season for Bancroft hockey

By Sarah Sobanski

Bancroft Jets from atoms to midgets teams are on their way to or already deep into their playoff and playdown series. That makes this second paper of the month an excellent time to talk about hockey etiquette.

Here at the *Bancroft This Week* office everyone has a hockey history. Our graphic designer Alex Banelopoulos plays on both a competitive and beer league team. In our ads department both Melissa Armstrong and Tim Jenkins are hockey parents. I played from eight to 18 ? I miss it dearly.

Together we agree there are some definite unwritten rules to hockey:

Die on the bench, not on the ice. If it's playoff time, more than ever, you go hard or you go home. There's no time for you to lay around on the ice and sop up everyone's game time momentum. Unless you're dying, get up, get off and get a fresh set of legs in the game. And please, don't limp off if you hurt your arm? Let's keep the dreaded one-leg-pushing to a minimum.

Applaud someone for getting up when injured. In the same breath, it takes a lot of courage to get up when you're winded from taking a puck to the gut or confused from a slap shot to the helmet. Kick the boards, pound your stick on the ice or bring your hands together for someone making the effort to get out of the way of the game when they're down for the count.

Hard down, hard back. Your legs might be jelly by the end of your shift, but you make sure you don't dawdle when you're getting off the ice. Odds are one of your teammates is champing at the bit, ready to take your place and get into the action. As soon as you hit the ice give it your all until you get off again.

Leave it on the ice. Things can get heated in the playoffs. Everyone played hard to get there and everyone wants to win ? but not everyone can. Add a referee who isn't making the calls you think he or she should be and a scrimmage easily turns into an all out war. No one will fault you for fighting your hardest, even if that means going a little hockey crazy. That being said, don't ask the defenceman who crosschecked you to meet you outside. Chalk it up to heat of the moment and always shake hands.

Pass the puck. It's OK to be an all-star, not so much a puck hog. Remember your team has worked just as hard as you for that playoff spot. More than one game has been lost because a player couldn't share the glory of a goal. Always play for the team.

Don't cherry pick. As a former defenceman, I implore you, don't hang out by the opposing team's blue line when the play is in your end. Cherry picking forces both teams to play four on four because the defenceman has to look after whoever thought it was a good idea to watch the puck and wait for a possible icing dump. If you're watching the puck you're better off on the bench. Get back and help set up the play to get it out of your end.

Nobody likes that parent. You're passionate, what can you say. Still, if the referee has to kick you out for yelling profanities you probably went too far. It happens, but don't hold up the game and argue. Just go watch from the lobby, or better, save it during the game for beer banter later.

Remember to send us your hockey stories and photos so we can get them into our Hockey Highlights. Best of luck from everyone here at the *This Week* to every Bancroft team. Keep your sticks on the ice!