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Letters

January 2, 2008

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Hockey school worth the effort

For a few Saturdays recently, instead of sleeping in like a hibernating bear, I have roused myself and my son Josh to attend the South Simcoe Hockey School. Getting up at 6:15 a.m. doesn't often hold the promise of being fun, but we have yet to be disappointed.

Josh has not had a lot of skating or hockey experience, so we were a bit nervous about throwing him into a hockey development program.

The school and three instructors are constantly changing drills and teaching different skills to keep players focused and motivated. These instructors recognize the investment parents are making and create a non-nonsense, pay attention and learn environment, but somehow keep it fun.

I enjoy sitting out in the cold arena, where you can hear the encouragement of the instructors, who are constantly watching. They address each player in a one on one moment, so that if someone doesn't get it, or is creating bad habits, they are the complete focus of attention with positive words and encouragement for at the least, a good try.

I think I have only seen them use pucks two or three times so far, but I haven't heard any complaints, there are too many other skills going on to miss it. But the pride of scoring a goal is still boasted about on the ride home, in the same breath as, "Did you see me unfreeze that guy?" in a rousing game of frozen tag.

Josh's skating has improved, along with skating classes to provide more ice time to practice in a time when ice is more precious than gold. He strides rather than runs down the ice and turns a good tight corner. He is playing hockey at the level he can handle, and really gets a feel for the game.

Even kids who are already in hockey programs can benefit greatly from this experience, getting the chance to hone skills that they are learning in their own practice sessions, or catching up to better, more seasoned players.

We have already signed him up for the next session, which starts Dec. 15, but Josh doesn't care though, he just wants to keep going and as long as he can keep up that spirit, my pillow can wait.

More information about the school, its coaches, and sessions can be found on their web site at <http://www.southsimcoehoc.com>.



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