

Who are you going to call in Guelph for one-on-one hockey coaching?

Puckmasters!

Indoor coaching facility improving hockey players around Guelph

GUELPH, Ontario (February 7, 2008)—When 11-year-old goalie Andrew Piluk missed a month of hockey due to pneumonia, his father took a chance on Puckmasters—a new one-on-one hockey coaching service in Guelph—to get him back in the groove.

Andrew, who plays for the Guelph Minor Pee wee Select Team, took two 30-minute sessions with his coaches at the Puckmasters facility at 987 York Road and made his comeback in a tournament, helping the team to a 5-0 record and the championship.

“He’s learned a lot from his coaches at Puckmasters who have definitely brought his skill level up,” said his father Dan Piluk, also a GMHA house league coach.

“Any time you can get one-on-one coaching in hockey, it’s great.”

Opened in September by Bob Herron of Guelph, a veteran minor hockey referee, Puckmasters is the first service of its kind in the area to offer year-round one-on-one hockey coaching.

The new 9,000-square-foot facility features two indoor skating pads with artificial ProSpeed skating surfaces, boards, glass and nets, as well as a skating treadmill, shooting simulators, NHL-style dressing rooms and more.

“We get everyone in here, from kids who want to play in the NHL to those who want to score their first goal,” says Herron, noting that the clientele seems equally divided between rep and house-league players.

“We work to help kids improve their hockey skills, and also their self confidence,” says Herron, 36, father of Ryan who plays defence for the Guelph Jr. Storm Minor Atom A team. “Our goal is to make kids feel good about themselves and to feel positive about what they’ve learned here.”

The main advantage to Puckmasters is one-on-one coaching, which is rare in hockey due to high costs for ice rental and coaching. But a 30-minute coaching session at Puckmasters is equal to two-and-a-half-hours of team practice, Herron says.

The students also get a much better workout on the ProSpeed artificial skating surface, which provides resistance training.

“The surface at Puckmasters naturally instills good skating habits in all our students, without them even realizing it,” says Kyle Campbell, the Head Instructor and Sales Manager at Puckmasters in Guelph. “The surface creates faster, stronger, better conditioned players.”

The facility includes an innovative skating treadmill that allows a student to work on conditioning and technique with a coach. The treadmill incorporates a video system that uses three cameras and three lasers to provide an accurate analysis of a player’s skating.

“With input from the coach and what students see on the video screen, they learn very quickly how to skate better,” says Herron, one of 28 active Puckmasters franchisees across North America.

There are also two shooting simulators that players shoot at with skates on—just like in a game—that test your skill and provide statistics on your shots. There’s also a lounge where parents can comfortably watch workouts or a big-screen TV.

With life-size pictures of stars like Sydney Crosby and Mats Sundin on the walls and high-energy music, Puckmasters has a hockey buzz that makes it exciting for any hockey fan.

Campbell says that Puckmasters is also a great value when compared to hockey camps or power skating sessions, where the ratio of instructors to students is often far greater and there’s less individual attention.

One Puckmasters package includes 12 sessions for \$399. The 8, 12 and 24 session packages are the most popular. A 30-minute detailed skills evaluation for \$25 helps to develop the program, which is customized to the needs of each student.

“A Puckmaster coach works exclusively with the child for the session, so we can really fine tune their skills. We ensure that students understand completely what they are learning, so you really get your money’s worth,” Herron says.

That’s been the experience of 12-year-old Erica, who plays right wing for the Guelph Girls Hockey Association A team. “With the one-on-one coaching, Puckmasters can really focus on skill development with a student like a tutor,” said her father Chris.

“Her shot has improved and her stability on the ice has also greatly improved. It’s been very effective for Erica because girls don’t play road hockey or watch a lot of hockey like boys. Puckmasters has been great for Erica.”

Herron says Erica’s experience is quite typical; once students have worked through their first set of sessions, they always sign up again.

For more information,
Bob Herron
Puckmasters
519.826.PUCK (7825)
guelph@puckmasters.com

Tim O’Connor
O’Connor Golf Communications
519.341.4778
tim@oconnorgolf.ca