

The question of hockey burnout – how much is too much?

Are you concerned your young athlete may experience burnout by participating in the National Sport Academy – will this be too much hockey for him/her? Since the inception of the National Sport Academy program in 1995, parents have asked about burnout - it is understandably an area of concern for many parents of aspiring young players.

What exactly is burnout and how does the National Sport Academy contribute to maintaining a love for the game by using hockey and the National Sport Academy school experience to positively influence the student athlete's overall growth and development as a person, student and athlete?

According to New York psychologist Herbert J. Freudenberger, PhD., who coined the term –

"burnout is a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by a devotion to a cause, a way of life, or a relationship that failed to produce the expected reward."

We have come to recognize that young players do not experience burnout because they are tired or on the ice too much. They experience burnout because they feel frustrated and dejected. Within a team environment, players often become discouraged with their play because of the pressures placed on them when success is determined only on the scoreboard. Feedback can sometimes be harsh and cutting; players feel their development is out of their

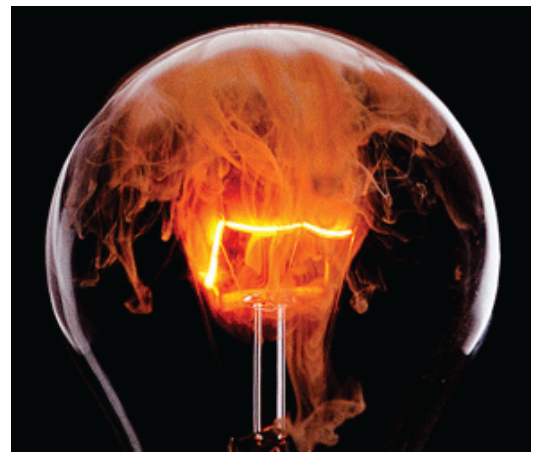
control and consequently they lose the passion to play. In short, the game is no longer fun!

"Burnout is a problem born of good intentions, because it happens when people try to reach unrealistic goals and end up depleting their energy and losing touch with themselves and others."

Recognizing this, the National Sport Academy program operates on the foundation of *"failing forward"*. Young athletes are encouraged to work through their challenges supported by a coaching staff who understand that to achieve each student athlete's significant dreams, considerable development is required. At the National Sport Academy, with development, comes the need to take risks, make mistakes and experience failure. If a team coach mishandles this learning process, learning can become arduous and very discouraging – learning can stop and burnout sets in.

"The irony of burnout is that it happens to the same person who previously was enthusiastic and brimming over with energy and new ideas when first involved in a job or a new situation."

Our goal is to have your young athlete come to the National Sport Academy program each day enthusiastic and brimming over with energy to play and learn. We work carefully to ensure the love of the game is encouraged with a positive, structured, comfortable



and safe environment where failure is a step to success and real learning can take place. The National Sport Academy staff is well prepared to work with any signs of burnout in your young athlete but the reality is our training environment often becomes the "safe place" that supports the sometime harsh realities of the outside hockey world where hockey burnout does have the potential to exist. Perhaps the National Sport Academy mission statement says it best as we are dedicated – *"To inspire passion for the game of hockey, while developing character for the game of life!"*

The National Sport Academy welcomes the opportunity to further discuss any of the points above with you.

Roger Wolfe

T: 403-777-3646

E: rwolfe@nationalsportacademy.com

W: www.nationalsportacademy.com

