

**Curtis Rodrigues**  
**U16 A Head Coach**

I'm Curtis. I'm a carpenter by trade with a passion to coach hockey. I've been coaching in Erie for the past three years. I've been around the game for a long time and now I get to give back to the next generation of players.

I became a coach because I just wanted to give back to the game that gave me so much. After playing for years, I felt like I could help young players grow and take their game to the next level. Plus, it's really rewarding to see them improve. In my personal life my friends and family keep me motivated. For my professional life it's to keep getting better at what I do and to teach and lead the younger generation of carpenters.

One of the biggest challenges I've faced was dealing with team chemistry issues. Sometimes players have disagreements, or there's tension in the locker room. It's tough, but it's important to get to the root of it and resolve it. To resolve it, I dealt with it head on. Sat down with the guys, talked through what was going on, and addressed the issue directly. Clear communication and understanding each other made a huge difference in turning things around.

One of my proudest achievements is helping kids break through to the next level. I've had players move on to higher levels of hockey, and that's really what it's all about for me. Watching them progress is a win in itself. I specialize in defense and systems hockey. I love breaking down the game and helping players understand positioning, strategy, and how to make the right decisions on the ice. My experience as a player really helps me connect with my players. I've been through the grind myself, so I know what they're going through. I can offer advice, help them with mindset, and teach them the technical stuff in a way that makes sense. Everything I do is focused on helping players improve. I'm committed to their development and take pride in seeing them grow, not just as players but as people. My goal is to help them reach their full potential, whether that's in hockey or in life.

I'm pretty straightforward and thorough. I don't sugarcoat things, but I make sure everyone understands what needs to be done to improve. I break things down and make sure the players really get it. DEFENCE FIRST! If you want to get better and really understand the game, I'm the guy for you. I've been through it all, and I can help you reach the next level. Whether you're struggling with defense or trying to get your system down, I'll give you the tools and guidance to succeed. I'm all about systems and structure. I believe in building from the back end and making sure everyone understands their role. Once you've got your system down, it makes everything else easier.

I focus on understanding the problem, not just putting a Band-Aid on it. Whether it's technical skills, mental challenges, or team dynamics, I work with players to really figure out what's going wrong and help them get past it. Honesty, hard work, and communication are what makes up my coaching style. I believe in being transparent with my players, pushing them to work hard, and making sure everyone is on the same page. Without those, it's tough to succeed.