

OMHA offers players tips heading into qualifiers

Written By **Brian Lockhart**

With provincial qualifiers now in full swing, the OMHA is providing tips to minor hockey players on how to prepare for a game as teams begin the quest for the Red Hats this season.

While the stress level can be high for young players during qualifiers and their quest to turn out their best performance, the OMHA encourages players to continue having fun while playing the sport.

As this could be the final few games for a team, having fun should be part of the season.

Sticking to a routine during qualifiers is very important. Keeping focused on the task at hand can help players relax before a game and remove any anxiety associated with trying to get the win.

Take the qualifiers one game at a time. Instead of being overwhelmed by a schedule of several games, players should focus on the game they are about to play.

Don't be distracted by thinking about games down the road. Play each game as a single event.

Never think your team can't win. Every year the OMHA has an underdog story about a team who rises to the challenge and wins.

Putting out a full team effort during every game may mean a team who is not favoured to win will come out on top.

Make sure you eat right before a game. Getting a proper night's rest and eating the right kind of foods before a game will help your energy levels and avoid feeling sluggish on the ice.

When you're on the ice, remember it is the little things that can make a difference during a game.

Those puck battles in the corner and the effort to get the puck before your opponent will add up over the course of a game and can tilt the odds in your favour.

Plan ahead and stay focused. You will know your game schedule in advance.

Avoid distractions by getting your homework completed before you head out to the rink and make sure you are at every practice.

By staying focused on the task at hand you and your team will have an advantage when it comes to playing for a provincial championship.