

MINDSET

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**CONCERNED ABOUT
YOUR ICE-TIME?**

**MAKE SURE YOU
ASK THE RIGHT
QUESTIONS**



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When a player is not getting ice-time, or specialty teams time, the first thing a player, (or parents or even the agent, at the junior or pro level) do, is run to the coach and ask ;
“What do I need to do to get more ice time?”

Wrong question!

More often than not, that question will not result in the outcome that either the player or the coach wants.

So before you run to the coach and ask that question, consider the following;

Below you will find a list of ***35 Questions to Ask Yourself Before Talking to Your Coach***, that might save you and your career from a more awkward downward spiral because you didn't get the answer you wanted.



Victory Starts In The Mind



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1. Skill Execution & Preparation

Practice Quality:

- Am I fully engaged and deliberate in every drill—puck-handling, shooting, skating—during practice?
- Which specific skills have I struggled with this week, and what extra reps have I taken to shore them up?

Game Simulation:

- How closely does my practice environment mimic real game pressure and pace?
- Do I consistently practice decision-making under time constraints and physical contact?

Preparation Routine:

- Am I following a consistent pre-practice and pre-game routine that optimizes my physical and mental readiness?
 - What adjustments could I make to my nutrition, sleep, or warm-up to feel sharper on the ice?
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2. Effort, Habits & Consistency

Work Ethic:

- Am I the first on and last off the ice in shifts and workouts?
- Do I sustain high compete-level effort even when the score or situation isn't in my favor?

Consistency:

- Have I delivered the same level of effort and focus in every shift, or do I have ups and downs?
- What patterns emerge in my performance—times of strong play versus lapses?

Follow-Through:

- When coaches give corrections, do I immediately apply them, or do old habits creep back?
 - How am I tracking progress on the adjustments I've committed to?
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3. Mindset & Confidence

Self-Talk:

- What messages am I telling myself after a mistake—is it constructive ("Next time, I'll...") or critical ("I always...")?

Fear of Failure:

- Do I hesitate or play more cautiously in important situations out of fear of making an error?
- How can I reframe mistakes as learning opportunities?

Role Acceptance:

- Am I at peace with my current role, or am I letting frustration cloud my performance?
 - What mindset shift would help me excel within the ice-time and role I have now?
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4. Coach & Teammate Communication

Feedback Loop:

- How often do I seek specific feedback from coaches about what I need to earn more ice time or different roles?
- Have I asked “What’s the one thing I can do better right now to move up the lineup?”

Relationship Building:

- Am I proactively building trust with coaches and veteran teammates by asking questions and showing a willingness to learn?
- Do I demonstrate coachability—taking notes, nodding, and following up after meetings?

Team Dynamics:

- How well am I communicating with my linemates and D-partners—are our reads and cues in sync?
 - In what ways could I be a better teammate (e.g., supporting others, maintaining energy on the bench)?
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5. Tactical & Hockey IQ

Game Awareness:

- Am I consistently in the right position at both ends of the ice, or am I getting caught flat-footed?
- How quickly am I processing information—pinch opportunities, gap control, reading plays?

Role-Specific Demands:

- Do I fully understand what my role on the power play or penalty kill requires—positioning, puck movement, defensive reads?
 - Have I watched league-leading units to identify habits I can adopt?
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6. Physical & Health Factors

Fitness & Recovery:

- Am I hitting my off-ice strength and conditioning targets to maintain stamina through all three periods?
- How effectively am I managing soreness, mobility, and injury prevention?

Nutrition & Hydration:

- Am I fueling and hydrating in a way that sustains high energy and focus through games and practices?
 - What small tweaks (e.g., timing of meals, electrolyte intake) could yield immediate performance gains?
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7. Goal Setting & Accountability

Short-Term Goals:

- What specific outcome do I want by the next game (e.g., “Win 80% of my board battles,” “Make two high-danger plays”)?
- How will I measure success and hold myself accountable?

Long-Term Vision:

- What milestones do I need to hit by mid-season to justify an expanded role?
 - Who will I enlist—coach, trainer, teammate—to check in on my progress?
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How to Use These Questions:

Journal Daily or Weekly

Select 3–5 questions each session and write honest, concrete answers.

Action Plan

For each insight, define one small, specific change (e.g., “Arrive 15 minutes early to practice to work on edge-work”).

Review & Adjust

Revisit your answers after two weeks to track progress, celebrate wins, and identify new focus areas.
