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JUST BETWEEN US O'FARRELL BOBBY ORR FUN & SAFE HOCKEY FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2010

Bobby Orr has a message for hockey parents, local officials and players

POSTED BY [BOFARRELL](#) AT 13H32



Hockey legend Bobby Orr is in the West Island this weekend to deliver a message

to young hockey players, their parents, coaches and league officials. It is a simple, straightforward point that - somehow with all the excitement, competitiveness and ambition surrounding the game - often gets overlooked.



Bobby Orr signed autographs for fans Thursday evening at Plaza Chevrolet in St. Laurent. (DARIO AYALA/The Gazette) [ENLARGE](#)

Minor hockey has to be a fun experience for all the kids who play.

That's it. That is Orr's message.

And if you think it doesn't need to be heard, the former Boston Bruins star defenceman has a folder of newspaper clippings that says different. He has catalogued all the stories that have made the headlines across Canada about young players being hurt on the ice and of parents fighting in the stands and in parking lots outside arenas.

"For anyone who doesn't think there are issues out there," Orr said in an interview Thursday, he points to his folder.

As one of three ambassadors of the Safe & Fun Hockey Festival that will be taking to the ice at Les 4 Glaces in Pierrefonds on Friday and Saturday, the Hockey Hall of Famer is hoping to draw attention to the need to reframe our attitudes toward the game.

"We are the adults. We have to work together so that every kid playing has a good experience," Orr said.

To that end, Orr will be meeting with parents, local hockey officials and players between the ages of 5 and 8 this weekend, both on and off the ice, in an attempt to talk about what he calls his program's two Rs - respect and responsibility.

For example, players, he explained, have a responsibility to say thank you to the adults who take the time to drive them to the arena, buy their equipment. They must learn to show and articulate their gratitude.

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When kids are on the ice, he says, there are two rules: they must have fun and they must listen. Once that is established, that is when they can be taught.

“Minor hockey should never be a bad experience for any kid, regardless of his or her ability. Putting pressure on them, humiliating them will only push them away from the game.”

Orr established the Fun & Safe Hockey movement about 11 years ago. With the help of his corporate sponsor, Chevrolet Canada, he hosts about four clinics across the country every year. When asked why, he smiles and explains that some of his fondest memories are the ones from his minor hockey days. And he remembers what his father used to say to people who thought his son showed talent for the game.

“My dad used to say, go out and have fun and we will see what happens.”

Not bad advice.

Brenda O'Farrell

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