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# How Can Sports Give My Child The Edge?



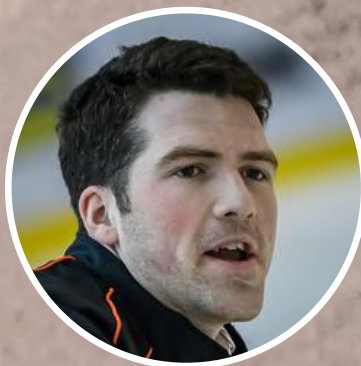
Kathy Ng  
Excel Fencing



Michael Fasching  
Harry Wright International



Brian Cook  
Harvest Sky



Benjamin MacAskill  
Junior Tigers



Tom Beresford  
Minisport HK



Diana Li  
Rugby Academy Asia



Stanley Chu  
The Upper Loft



# INTRODUCTION

“

*Staying healthy is important. We all know that, especially with the pandemic this year. Having kids play sports not only helps to improve physical health, but also benefits them in other ways - for example improving their emotional well-being and academics.*

*This time, we've invited experts in sports education to explain to us how fencing, swimming, cycling, ice hockey, rugby and golf can give children the edge. Read on to find out their thoughts!*

”



**JENNIFER CHIN**  
FOUNDER & CEO

**WHIZPA**



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**KATHY NG**

*General Manager*

**Excel Fencing**

## Fencing

Fencing is one of the oldest competitive sports with its origins in swordplay going back thousands of years. Its evolution over the centuries has seen it progress from military training use to its modern day form that many of us recognise today.

## Benefits Of Fencing For A Child

Fencers learn to stay highly focused and make firm decisions when they train and play. A reality is that no one wins all the time and the fight to stand up for the next point and the next game is what drives every player. Fencing is fast and fencers learn quickly to pick themselves up and to remain calm for the next game. Like learning to excel at anything, it takes time to build up courage, and the ultimate reward here is strength in character.

## How Parents Can Encourage This Sport

Like many sports, fencing can be played for fun or competitively. Either way, it takes time to train, to develop a good foundation, and to become passionate to want to be more. We have seen younger fencers in particular thrive from their parent's encouragement to stay focused on achieving a certain standard and to simply get back up when needed.

A little nudge goes a long way when parents remind them that the results we see on a competitive stage come from years of dedication and hard work.

## Uniqueness

Fencing has been an Olympic sport since the Games began over a century ago. The sport is sometimes likened to a game of human chess. At a competitive level, strategy can be more important than strength as a solid foundation becomes the norm and experience becomes the deciding factor. We all start from somewhere and fencers often thrive on their pace of personal growth that comes in both mind and body strength.

## Individual Game And Playing As A Team

There are 3 different swords used in fencing - Sabre, Foil, and Épée. Each type has its own rules and dynamics and players usually find early on the one that is most suited to their personality and that they enjoy most. Fencing is always played one player against another, but it can also be played between teams, and this can bring the game to another level. Team games encourage fencers to bond as each member works to accumulate points.





### Safety

Despite its appearance, fencing is one of the safest sports and has amongst all games some of the lowest injury rates at the Olympics. Official fencing rules require fencers to wear protective gear made of fabric that can resist a force of 800 newtons (180 lbf) and a mask that withstands 25kg (55 lb) on the mesh and 1600 newtons (360 lbf) on the bib. This uniform set is like the modern form of an armour to protect fencers, leaving them to concentrate on just playing.

“

*My son has been with Excel for several years and has enjoyed group and individual classes with very supportive coaches. Opportunities to enter competitions, as well as develop discipline and concentration skills, whilst engaging in an elegant and timeless sport.*

”



Excel fencing consists of three disciplines of épée, foil and sabre, named after 3 types of swords. We have highly-trained professional fencing instructors who have experience with all ages (particularly children and youths), and have previously worked with international schools. Our head coach has more than 15 years experience with 8 years as an instructor specialising in working with children and young adults.

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## MICHAEL FASCHING

*Performance Director & Head Coach*

**Harry Wright International**

Swimming is proven to be one of the most beneficial forms of exercise that any person can engage in. Below we have highlighted the five most important ways that swimming can benefit children right from the beginning all the way through to College!

Did you know that swimmers can start as young as 4 months old in the Harry Wright International (HWI) programme? The HWI parent-assisted programme lays the foundation for life skills. We believe that swimming is a marvellous way to boost brain development in your baby!

Swimming can integrate physical, emotional and mental learning in an environment that is both enjoyable and stimulating for young children. As children develop through a 'Learn to Swim' programme essential life lessons are also taught, including resilience, respect, and emotional control. Once children progress into a more competitive environment these mental skills are developed at the same time as the physical developments that a rigorous training schedule puts upon an athlete. Through this journey swimmers develop above-average time management skills, emotional skills, and goal setting skills. These are all highly prized attributes that admission departments of universities look out for in potential candidates.

A great example from HWI is Hong Kong Olympic swimmer Siobhan Haughey, swimming from a very young age, who achieved a top of range score in her DSE exams whilst still completing her normal training schedules of between 6 – 10 sessions per week!

## Stimulates The Growth Of Brain Cells And Cognitive Ability

Regular participation in swimming is proven to be beneficial for the development of cognitive abilities. Recent studies show that 3 - 5 year old children who participate in swimming, were up to 11 months ahead of the average population in verbal skills, six months ahead in math skills, and two months ahead in literacy skills. Research suggests that these benefits can happen at any age, but are particularly present in those who have started swimming from a young age.

## Swimming Improves Muscle Definition, Strength And Flexibility

Being a full body sport means that whilst swimming you engage muscles throughout the body, making swimming one of the best forms of aerobic exercise. Swimming requires you to reach, stretch, and pull your way through the water, as well as kicking through the hips and ankles requiring the body to move in multiple ways all at the same time. This large range of movement not only exercises the whole body, but also teaches the brain fine motor skills, co-ordination, and a strong base of physical literacy.



“

*They have shown great patience and consistent teaching techniques with my daughter. They also make it fun for the children as they learn how to swim or improve on their skills. My daughter has vastly improved her swimming skills with Harry Wright.*

”

## Swimming Can Improve Exercise-Induced Asthma

In a recent study, a group of children that completed a six-week swimming course saw improvements in their asthma symptoms, and these benefits were still noted a full year after the course ended. People who don't have asthma will benefit from swimming as it increases overall lung-volume and teaches good breathing techniques.

## Swimming Reduces Anxiety, Stress, And Depression

At the same time swimming is also well known for its therapeutic effects on the mind and psyche. It gives its young participants an opportunity and physical outlet for dealing with frustrations and pressure. All that is an ideal healthy way to combat mental health problems often caused by academic stress and coping with living in a foreign country and unknown environment.

## Athletic Performance May Give Your Child The Chance To Receive A College Scholarship

Many US colleges have a swimming team that competes at the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Division 1, 2, or 3 competitions. Universities compete with one another to recruit the best swimmers in the world to study at their university. The following Harry Wright International swimmers have been accepted to some of the best universities in the US based on their high level of academic achievements combined with their achievements as age group swimmers, and received partial or even full scholarships:

- Anne Marie Munk – HK Olympic swimmer, University of Southern California
- Dominik Meichtry – Switzerland Olympic swimmer, University of California Berkeley
- Hannah Wilson – HK Olympic swimmer, University of California Berkeley
- Geoffrey Cheah – HK Olympic swimmer, Stanford University
- Siobhan Haughey – HK Olympic swimmer, University of Michigan



Established in 1975, Harry Wright International has been offering a successful program of swimming lessons and training for children, from professional swimming instructors. Our program of lessons is designed to give children all the skills they need to benefit and enjoy the sport of swimming as well as providing pathways of excellence for competitive swimmers. We pride ourselves on taking care of the individual needs of each child ensuring every swimmer reaches their maximum potential. This summer we offer swimming courses at various locations throughout Hong Kong.

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# HARRY WRIGHT INTERNATIONAL THE PREMIER SWIMSCHOOL

## SWIMMER TESTIMONIAL



*"THE HARRY WRIGHT INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME CONSISTS OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED COACHES WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT COACHING. THEY ARE PROFESSIONALS WHO CARE ABOUT NOT ONLY THE SWIMMING SKILLS OF ATHLETES, BUT ALSO THEIR WELL-BEINGS. BECAUSE OF THIS THEY HAVE A LONG HISTORY OF DEVELOPING WORLD CLASS SWIMMERS."*

### **SIOBHAN HAUGHEY**

HONG KONG OLYMPIC SWIMMER  
RIO 2016

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## BRIAN COOK

*Cyclist*

**Harvest Sky**

### Search For Self-Awareness Through Sports

Different from arts and science-related activities like painting, conducting experiments, or engaging in online learning, sports can motivate children to open up themselves to be more active, adventurous, courageous and competitive. These are traits that are important for children to find out their own strengths and weaknesses which in turn helps them understand more about their passion.

Once children are aware of their personal strengths and interests they can effectively maximise their talents through better planning and prioritisation.

### Building Core = Building Focus

The core of the body represents the centre of focus hence building a strong core will result in not only good balance in all sports but strength and endurance. I taught my kids cycling from as early as 2 yrs old. They also learned swimming and horseback riding. Every sport requires a strong core to radiate to energy and ensures a strong foundation. Once children learn about the importance of the core, they will apply it to any kind of sports and they will make improvements very quickly. Children who are good at multiple sports are normally more focused, more ambitious and more well-rounded.

### Sports Promote Bonding Between Family and Friends

Be it a family golf game or cycling tour or swimming relay, team sports help strengthen team spirit and human interaction. From the practices to the pep rally to the cheering, children benefit from the encouragement and camaraderie that their teammates and parents offer. Most successful entrepreneurs and leaders have participated in some sort of team sports in the past as they learned how to effectively interact with others, complement each other, and enhance their friendships and relationships via post-sports networking and celebrations.

### Motivation And Discipline

My cycling school Ride-a-Learning places a heavy focus on children's discipline. They cannot be late to class, they have to carry their own equipment and clean up the equipment after practice, and they must remind their parents to pay their tuition. Children who do sports tend to be more independent and disciplined in their daily lives and also in their studies. My sports education and management company's focus on "corporate athleticism" also teaches companies to hire employees who are like corporate athletes - they are self-motivated, they know when it's time for peak performance, they are disciplined in their own well-being and they are respectful towards their bosses and others around them.





### What Sport Gives My Child An Edge

Children should be exposed to different sports to identify which sport they are ultimately passionate about. Whether it's squash or wake boarding or ultimate frisbee, the sport is something that can make the child wake up excited for that daily practice or competition. A coach also makes a big difference. A good and motivational coach can help bring out the best passion from the child in excelling in the sport. Many schools look more for athletes who are passionate and want to succeed in one or two niche sports and the best combination is a sport that requires fast hand eye coordination with effective footwork such as netball and another sport that requires endurance and resilience such as swimming.

“  
*Brian has inspired my son to pick up mountain biking from an early age on which built his stamina and self-confidence. He is a superb coach and father to his own kids.*  
”

**Harvest Sky**  
Enterprises Limited

Harvest Sky Enterprises Limited is a sports education company with its belief "The Sky is the Limit for Athletes and Achievers".

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## **BENJAMIN MACASKILL**

*Head Coach*

### **Junior Tigers**

### **Deal With Adversity**

It might be difficult to watch from the side lines, but allow children to try and fail. And then, encourage them to try again. It's not the setback that matters, but the response to the setback that helps develop problem solving skills and resilience. It's critical that children are offered the opportunity to try, make a mistake and fail, and then given the opportunity to come back stronger. Success isn't linear and every successful hockey player faces adversity -- it's the response to that adversity that matters. At the Junior Tigers our focus is on providing each player with opportunities to grow and develop. In practical terms this means that each player has the chance to try, fail and then try again. We want to teach our players to be afraid of nothing and to turn nerves into positive energy.

### **Culture Is Key**

A good hockey club will have its values embedded in everything it does. At the Junior Tigers we believe in respecting all officials, teammates and opponents. We want to support our teammates when a mistake is made. We also value humility and believe clear communication is key. While a lot of these values are put into practice on the ice, parents, carers and families can help to reinforce these values in a number of ways -- on the way to and from the rink, for example, when discussing an opponent or recapping the game. Or from the stands when an opposing team scores the winning goal.

Young players are looking to us to model and embody the culture of the hockey club and so adults need to set a good example.

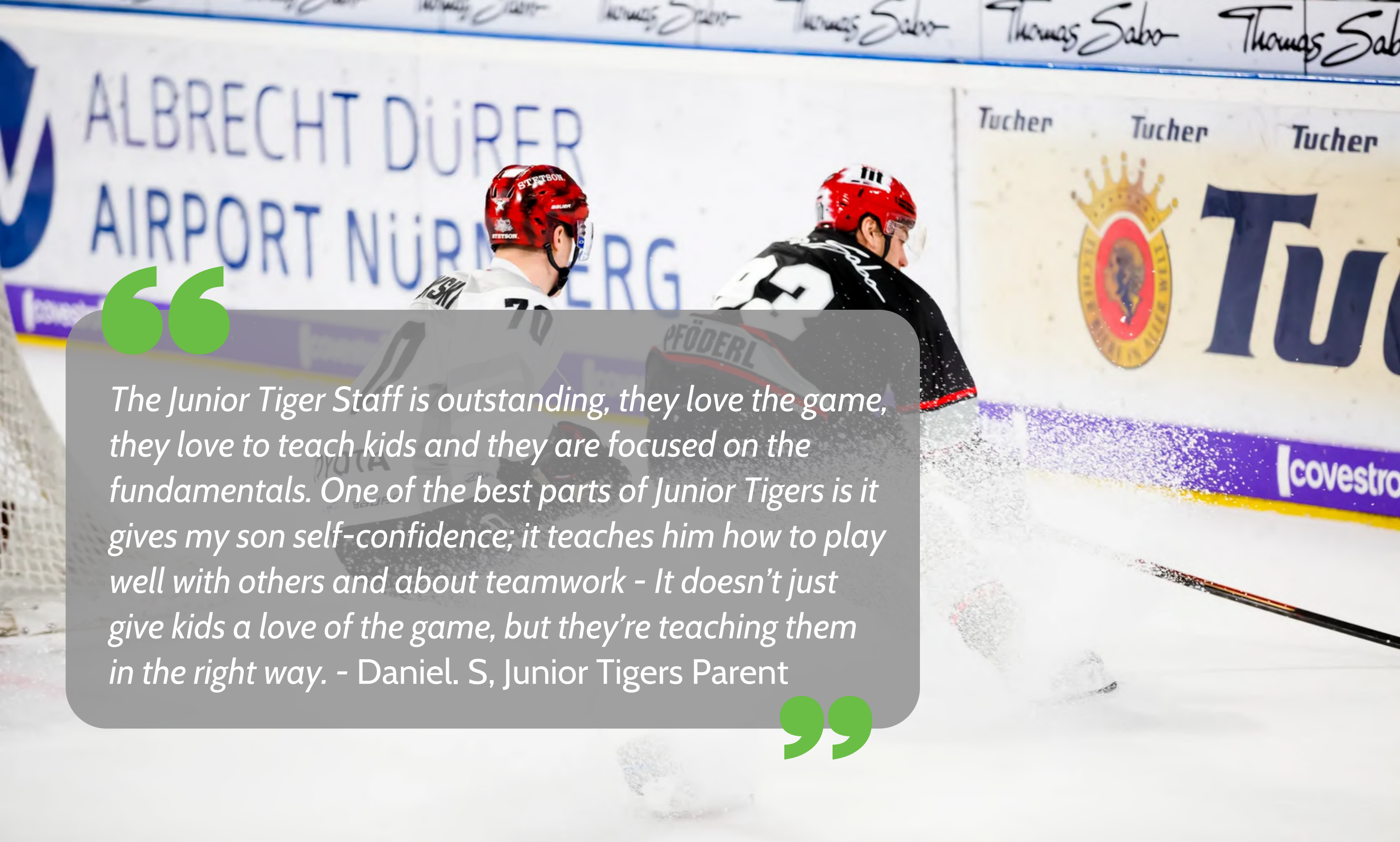
### **Reinforce Hard Work And Never Accept Complacency**

Our emphasis is on growth and development and, above all, fun. One thing that we're not focused on is winning at all costs. Instead, we reinforce hard work (while, of course, having fun) and the idea that if we work hard, we will find success. Success isn't a given and so even if we achieve it, we can't be complacent and must work harder. Hard work is a skill that all children need to develop and it's something that should be reinforced daily both on and off the ice. We like to acknowledge our players for working hard, not for being talented.

### **Encourage Leadership And Creativity**

Hockey provides great opportunities for leadership and creativity and some of these great moments have emerged when our young players have faced adversity. At the Junior Tigers we give young players the opportunity to grow and develop and the chance to be leaders both on and off the ice. We are proud of the way that players lift one another up and support each other during difficult moments.





“

*The Junior Tiger Staff is outstanding, they love the game, they love to teach kids and they are focused on the fundamentals. One of the best parts of Junior Tigers is it gives my son self-confidence; it teaches him how to play well with others and about teamwork - It doesn't just give kids a love of the game, but they're teaching them in the right way. - Daniel. S, Junior Tigers Parent*

”

We also ask our players to seek out creativity opportunities during game play, a perfect environment to grow and develop. Through active encouragement, our players understand that these are two skills we want them to develop and they know that they will be given the opportunity to try, fail and try again.

### **Discipline And Preparation Lead To Success**

Sometimes in sport we have a tendency to talk about the idea of “luck”, but what we mean is that success is what happens when preparation meets opportunity. In other words, players need to be prepared so that when an opportunity arises, they can grab it. Preparedness filters through everything we do and there are plenty of ways to help reinforce this at home. Players should be prepared (well-rested, hydrated and having eaten the right foods for example) for practices, games, events and meetings. Be organized with gear, arrive at the rink early and be mentally prepared to work hard and have fun.



Through the Junior Tigers, children of all ages have the opportunity to train in a positive and competitive environment that promotes learning and growth.

Children benefit both physiologically and mentally from taking up sports at an early age and these benefits continue through to adulthood. We are committed to their physical, social, and character development whilst in pursuit of excellence in the sport of hockey.

Coaching is provided by elite CIHL players, Hong Kong's 1st and only full contact elite ice hockey league, and we continuously challenge every child to be the best person and player they can be.

The Junior Tigers offers a number of training sessions, leagues (elite and house), camps and tournaments throughout the season catering to children of all ages and abilities in a variety of age groups. There is no restriction on a participant's passport or country of origin and all are welcome to enjoy the various programs.

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## TOM BERESFORD

*Head Coach*

**Minisport HK**

### A Well-Rounded Foundation

Every sport has something unique to offer to a child's physical and mental development. We believe in exposing children to as many sports as possible in order to give them the opportunity to develop a true passion. When kids experience a range of different activities, they will be stimulated by the variety and enjoy themselves more. On top of that, many techniques transfer from one sport to another - so by developing their knowledge across the board, they will see an overall improvement in their sporting ability as well as build a range of valuable life skills.

### Building A Healthy Self-Image

Playing sports goes far beyond simply developing physical skills; it's a great way to boost a child's confidence and self-esteem. As children find success while being challenged both physically and mentally, they will very quickly improve their self-image. They will become more comfortable with taking on new challenges and pushing themselves outside of their comfort zone.

### Making Friends And Socialising

At the most basic level, the majority of people want to play sports in order to spend time with their friends.

This is most imperative for children, as socialisation in their early years makes them more comfortable around others, and more outgoing in later stages of their life. Some of my fondest childhood memories are of playing sports outside with my pals, and this is the root of my passion to foster the same experiences for young children. Our goal at Minisport first and foremost is to facilitate fun with friends.

### Teamwork Makes The Dream Work

One of the many benefits of playing sports is developing a strong ability to communicate and work together as a team. This is a key skill that translates to almost all facets of life, both on and off the pitch. We make it a point to encourage children to solve problems by working together as a group, which trains their ability to not only contribute, but also listen and respect others.

### An Active And Healthy Lifestyle

In our modern world, physical fitness is often overlooked. Our multiple sports approach provides children with a wide range of movement and activity, leading to more balanced overall fitness.





It is extremely important for children to maintain an active lifestyle from an early age, as this will lead to countless health benefits as well as a better quality of life in the future. We encourage children to get outside and play, which will help them improve their aerobic capacity and lay the groundwork for a healthy lifestyle in the long term.

“

*I would like to recommend Matt and his team not only for the great approach to kids, they love what they do but also how great they work with parents. It's possible to arrange classes at private venue, be flexible, arrange make up classes. All super important for parents. Flexibility and understanding.*

”

**minisport**

We are now proud to coach sport to over 400 children per week in Hong Kong. We deliver holiday sport camps at 5 locations during school holidays and help over 50 families per year to celebrate their child's birthday party in style! Our program is designed so that children can sample multiple sports through small group classes, following one high quality coaching program.

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**DIANA LI**

*Director*

**Rugby Academy Asia**

## Build Character

Rugby can help kids develop leadership skills, self-discipline, respect for authority, competitiveness, cooperativeness, sportsmanship, and self-confidence. These are many of the positive attributes that fall under the heading of “character” that we can learn through rugby training and competing within the rugby community.

## Build Values

Rugby is like a miniature life situation — one in which youngsters have to learn to cope with many of the important realities of life. Within playing rugby, they learn to cooperate with others, to compete, to deal with success and failure, to develop self-control, and to take risks. Important attitudes are formed about achievement, authority and persistence in the face of difficulty.

## Make Lifelong Friends

When you laugh, cry, feel sad and angry on and off the rugby field with someone;

when you fight side by side, shoulder to shoulder with someone; you know you have friends for a lifetime.

## Time Management

Rugby can range from simply providing a worthwhile leisure-time activity to laying the foundation for becoming an Olympic champion or a professional rugby player. To balance between study and rugby goals, time management is the key.

## Improve Physical And Mental Toughness

Both physical and mental toughness is a set of specific, learnable skills. In rugby, it gives kids the opportunities to appraise themselves and handle pressure situations in ways that arouse a positive desire to achieve rather than a fear of failure.





“

*Big thanks RAA! My 12yrs-old boy met Liam Messam, the captain of New Zealand National Rugby team, in person at the special training session. Being able to interact face to face with the legend himself, its inspirational and eye-opening to my kid and most importantly he had great fun the whole time. RAA is one of the only few able to organize such unique master session, they know what the kids need best and they are able to deliver various events to accommodate. Keep up the good job RAA!*

”



Rugby Academy Asia (RAA) is a rugby academy with the key objective of increasing levels of rugby participation across Asia at a local level. The RAA uses a dynamic and fun approach to deliver success, enabling players to grow in confidence and leadership throughout the programmes.

[www.facebook.com/RugbyAcademyAsia](https://www.facebook.com/RugbyAcademyAsia)

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## STANLEY CHU

*Co-Founder*

**The Upper Loft**

### A Head Start To A Bright Future

Playing golf involves a great degree of self-discipline and focus as it takes time and good decision-making skills to decide what your next move is. Having this type of self-discipline and focus acquired at a young age is greatly advantageous as they are skills that will ultimately increase school and work performance. The focus that is required for golf is also not one that lasts for just an hour – it is a type of self-determination and focus that drives a golfer to practice, improve and ultimately hone his own self-discipline in the world outside.

### Build A Reputation

As we move further into the 21st century, schools are no longer just looking at children's grades. There are certain types of exposure money can't buy and sports is part of it. Having a good sports performance gives a child extra exposure such as being interviewed by news media, being featured on social media and even getting the opportunity to play with other schools or in other countries. This is something that money or having good grades can't guarantee.

### Boost Your Career

Golf plays a perfect role in showing others your self-discipline, but it can also aid a child to fast-track their way into their future.

Take Hong Kong's very own Tiffany Chan for example, her portfolio as a professional female golfer managed to jumpstart her scholarship at the University of Southern California and she has now managed to be the first Hong Kong female to make it into the LPGA Tour. What Tiffany has shown us is that although sports may seem like a hobby or side gig, it is actually something that can boost your child's future career.

### Establish A Diverse Network

The long hours one spends during a golf game are often not spent alone – whether it is with friends, business partners or complete strangers, there is a certain comradeship between your flight mates. This social interaction is very much unlike other sports as the slower nature of golf encourages a child to partake in discussions and conversations that one just cannot get from playing basketball or tennis – golf is like an entire package where sports performance is just one single element of a much bigger picture.

### Be International

With cities expanding and the concept of urban life being fully integrated in the 21st century lifestyle, a city such as Hong Kong is slowly running out of recreational space.





The concept of indoor golf is perfect for giving children the edge they need by providing an accessible venue to practice sports and build social skills right in the heart of a city. Your child can experience playing golf all over the world with the many courses made available through innovative technology, while still keeping up with city life. It isn't just about getting good grades anymore: you play golf, you get the edge.

“

*I have been a member at the upper loft for a few months and can highly recommend it to any one who loves the game of golf. The simulator is extremely accurate and a useful training aid, and I personally use the launch monitor and video replay to help improve my swing. The staff are very friendly and help make the experience enjoyable.*

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## THE UPPER **LOFT**

As the finest indoor golf club in Hong Kong, The Upper Loft unites golf amateurs and seasoned enthusiasts together in one social environment. We redefine golf as a modern lifestyle choice where people can practice and improve their swings, or have fun with friends while learning all about the sport.

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