

# Director of Hockey Operations & 18U Head Coach

## Nichols School

Founded in 1892, Nichols School is a premier independent college preparatory school in Buffalo, New York, serving students in grades 5–12. For more than a century, Nichols has built one of the most respected hockey traditions in Western New York and beyond, consistently fielding highly competitive AAA 18U and 16U programs that develop student-athletes both on and off the ice. The Nichols School campus consists of 30 plus acres in the heart of Buffalo, NY, including the Buyers Family Arena with two hockey rinks.

Nichols School is seeking an experienced, energetic, and visionary leader to serve as **Director of Hockey Operations and Head Coach of the AAA 18U program**. This is a unique opportunity to lead and shape one of the region's most established hockey programs while mentoring elite student-athletes in a mission-driven educational environment.

## Position Overview

The Director of Hockey Operations & 18U Head Coach will oversee the strategic direction, culture, operations, and continued growth of the Nichols hockey program, with primary responsibility for coaching the AAA 18U team. The ideal candidate will bring a passion for player development, a strong hockey network, exceptional organizational skills, and a commitment to building a positive, disciplined, and high-character culture.

This role requires a leader who embraces the balance between athletic excellence and the educational mission of an independent school environment.

## Key Responsibilities

### Hockey Program Leadership

- Provide overall leadership and strategic direction for the Nichols hockey program
- Maintain and strengthen Nichols' longstanding tradition of competitive AAA hockey excellence
- Oversee alignment and development across the 18U and 16U programs
- Develop a clear player development philosophy consistent across all levels
- Assist in long-term program planning, recruiting, scheduling, and growth initiatives
  
- Assist in guiding student-athletes in their post Nichols playing career through relationships with collegiate and junior hockey programs

### 18U Head Coaching Responsibilities

- Serve as Head Coach for the Nichols AAA 18U team
- Plan and lead practices, games, video sessions, and off-ice development
- Foster a disciplined, competitive, and team-oriented culture
- Support player advancement opportunities to junior, collegiate, and higher levels of hockey
- Communicate regularly and professionally with players and families

## **Operations & Administration**

- Manage hockey operations including scheduling, travel coordination, tournament planning, and program logistics
- Assist with staffing, coach development, and evaluation of assistant coaches
- Coordinate with admissions and school leadership regarding student-athlete recruitment and retention
- Support budgeting and operational planning for the hockey program
- Ensure compliance with league, school, and player safety standards

## **Community & Relationship Building**

- Serve as an ambassador for Nichols hockey within the Western New York hockey community and beyond
- Build strong relationships with alumni, families, junior programs, college coaches, and hockey organizations
- Help elevate the visibility and reputation of Nichols hockey regionally and nationally

## **Qualifications**

- Significant coaching experience at the AAA, junior, prep school, collegiate, or professional level
- Strong knowledge of player development and modern hockey systems
- Proven leadership and program-building experience preferred
- Excellent communication, organizational, and relationship-management skills
- Passion for mentoring and developing student-athletes
- Ability to work evenings, weekends, and travel as required
- Collegiate playing experience and/or advanced coaching certifications preferred

## **Desired Characteristics**

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- High character and integrity
- Competitive drive balanced with a student-centered mindset
- Strong leadership presence and accountability
- Energy, professionalism, and organizational excellence
- A commitment to building culture, tradition, and long-term success

## **Why Nichols Hockey?**

Nichols School offers:

- A deeply rooted and highly respected hockey tradition spanning more than 100 years
- Competitive AAA 18U and 16U programs with strong regional and national visibility
- Outstanding student-athletes and engaged families
- A supportive independent school environment committed to excellence
- The opportunity to shape the future of one of Western New York's premier hockey programs

Salary Range: \$65,000 - \$110,000 plus competitive benefits package

Location: Nichols School; Buffalo New York

## **Application Process**

Interested candidates should submit:

- Cover letter
- Resume
- Coaching philosophy statement
- List of references

Please submit applications to JJ Bennett, Nichols Director of Athletics.  
jbennett@nicholsschool.org

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled.