

Carl Michaelson

After graduating University in 2004, Carl Michaelson played professionally in France, the USA, and Belgium. Carl then began coaching at his Alma Mater Hobart College. These years were spent scouting, recruiting, and serving as assistant coach. In 2012 he left Hobart to assume the Head Coaching duties at SUNY Canton. Carl then took his experience to France where he guided two different professional teams. Along the way, Carl has maintained scouting responsibilities with the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles of the QMJHL, as well as the Cedar Rapids RoughRiders of the USHL. In 2004, Carl co-founded Westlake Hockey Development Inc., which is focused on teaching methods that relate to developing life and hockey skills with young players. This program has had success in helping aspiring young hockey players to achieve their objectives beyond minor hockey. During the 2015-2016 season, Carl guided the Cree Nation Midget Bears hockey program to one of their most successful seasons in the past 11 years. In 2016-2017 Carl spent the season at world renowned Athol Murray College of Notre Dame in Wilcox, SK. Carl was the male hockey coordinator and assumed coaching duties for one of their Midget AAA teams. These last two seasons have been spent coaching at Collège Bourget, and serving as the Program Director.

JM: What was the first thing you were excited to do as COVID restrictions began to ease up a little bit?

CM: I mean, listen. We normally play games here. last year. Everyone's chomping at the bit to play games. I would say probably the global message from parents, players, and everybody is to play some meaningful games and competitions. So, that would probably be the most exciting thing everybody was looking forward to.

JM: Absolutely. Paint a picture for me of the family life right now. Any pets? Where do you live now? Where you grew up? Kind of things like that.

CM: I grew up in a small town called Hudson. Just literally the town over from campus here. I don't have a family right now. My parents live a couple of streets over. My brother's out in Halifax with his family. I have a couple of cats. I used to have a dog but I broke up with my girl so she kept the dog.

JM: Sorry to hear that.

CM: It's all right. I'm actually dog-sitting right now, so I have the dog. You could say I have a dog, I guess. It's just not a full-time dog.

JM: It doesn't have to be hockey related, just in general. What is one thing you're not good at that you maybe wish you were?

CM: Do you know what? I've been getting better with patience. Patience is probably my worst enemy and could be my greatest strength as well when you compare it to being proactive and going after stuff. But at the same time, always look at yourself in the mirror and being able to recognize when you need to be a little more patient and wait a little longer to react to something.

I would say that was something just from my childhood growing up. I think as you get older, you get more aware of things. You have the intelligence and the opportunity to work on them a little more. So, I would say probably just patience is something I constantly need to just continue working on every day.

JM: Perfect. That's a good one. If you had to eat one food for every meal for the rest of your life, so, it's the only thing you could ever eat again, what would it be?

CM: I mean, we're talking about a meal or one item?

JM: Either or.

CM: I will eat farm-fresh to free run eggs with great high-quality bread and salted butter with hot sauce all over my eggs.

JM: That's an interesting one. Any reason in particular?

CM: I just love eggs. Do you know the whole eggs for dinner commercials that we see often? Like, that's me. I could have been in those commercials. I try not to abuse them, but there's a lot of nice farms out here so you can get some really fresh eggs that are farm-raised, then, the chickens are healthy. No antibiotics. They always taste different and better. I spent a lot of time in Europe so I really appreciate really good high-quality bread and salted butter, and I love hot sauce. So, that's my go-to.

JM: Perfect. Favorite subject in school? Whether that was elementary, high school, or if you did university.

CM: I love dates and good numbers. So, I love math, physics, statistics. I also loved astronomy. In university, I took an astronomy course as an elective. I loved astronomy.

JM: Any reason in particular?

CM: I've always been fascinated with the unknown. Like planets, stars, universes, and galaxies. I've just always been fascinated. The fear of the unknown, that's probably my greatest fear. It was just like understanding what's out there. It's crazy.

JM: That's good. For baseball, you have a walk-up song. If you're a fighter, you have an entrance song. What song would you pick for those types of things?

CM: Wow. That's tough. My greatest mentor, Coach Frank, was my college coach. I worked for him. 'The Who' 'Teenage Wasteland' is a song that forever will be etched inside of me, and it's for those reasons. So, probably 'The Who' 'Teenage Wasteland'.

JM: That's a good one. If you could spend one day living as a different person, you can go as far back in history as you want, who would that be and why?

CM: It would probably be somebody who's lived a long life and who's had the opportunity to witness many things. Many changes. Whether they were technology changes or civilization changes. Even though when you go through civilization changes there's probably a lot of warfare, and maybe death, unfortunately. I mean, I don't know. It would just be pretty interesting to live that. Maybe also see what it's like to be a person like Michael Jordan or Wayne Gretzky. That'd be pretty interesting. So, something that would take you through many periods of history and maybe some sort of like a high-profile person to wonder what it's like to be in their shoes.

JM: Okay. I think that's good. What's something most people from around the hockey world don't know about you that's either a big part of your life or you think is pretty interesting.

CM: Wow. That's a tough one.

JM: It could obviously be something that your co-workers know but maybe other programs don't.

CM: Yes. What would people not know about me? If you don't know, I'm Jewish. I don't really practice it and I'm not very religious, but I had a bar mitzvah when I was younger. So, most people don't realize I'm Jewish. Sometimes when it comes up, they usually don't even believe me. So, maybe that could be one.

JM: Usually you don't get much of off-season, obviously, in this league. But what do you like to do away from the rink in the off-season or just in your spare time?

CM: I live on a golf course. My business partner and I, my business partner is Matt Lombardi, we usually golf together. I'm a huge foodie so I love just having great meals with friends and family, or going on discovering new places or restaurants. I love discovering different wines as well from around the world. So, I love food and wine. I love golfing and playing squash as well. I play a lot of squash.

JM: Awesome. How did you get involved in your current role?

CM: Well, my business partner, Matt, and I, years ago, started a summer development program in 2005. Obviously, at the time we were both starting our respective different careers. Both playing hockey and me eventually coaching. Over time, we always had a long-term vision of bringing it to a school. Combining with schools. We both lived through each other in our respective endeavors. He knows that I want that school. I went the prep school routes and he always thought it was a good way to combine what we're doing in development and have a ten-month platform instead of just a little bit of time in the summer. Matt was nearing his retirement, and I was trying to make my way slowly back to Canada and back home from where I was running around. We grew up right next to the school here. The school has been around forever. We've known tons of people that have come to this school. Some close friends have been involved in the school for generations. It was just something that evolved just on its own. Now, it's just something that I will just continue growing.

JM: What about the CSSHL model do you like the most?

CM: I just love the overall culture behind it. It's an authentic hockey league. It's got great hockey people. Many great programs. I just find the culture of it as awesome. I love the professionalism about it, certainly, the people. My colleagues that are adversaries are just great guys and good hockey people. Overall, I just love the fact that it's a very professionally ran and organized league. Really proud to be a part of it.

JM: Awesome. Best piece of advice you've ever gotten in life, and it doesn't have to be hockey-related.

CM: Really, related to that patience then. It's just to take my time and make sure that you don't do things too quick in order not to forget things, in order to do them as best as you can, and as accurately as possible. Usually, your weaknesses are recognized by others. I've had great mentors and, of course, my parents, coaches, friendships, and people. These people are always there for you and looking out for your greater good. So, I think it's that. It's just making sure you're taking your time to make important decisions. Everyone uses that cross the t's dot the I's. Making sure you're taking your time. Just do things right. Make the best decisions possible and don't be in a hurry to get things done if you have time.

JM: Okay. Perfect. Last one here for you. Your favorite hockey memory. So, something that stands out to you, from either when you're playing or your coaching. Just something to you that's just your favorite. If you have more than one, that's fine as well.

CM: Well, there's two but there's one particular. They're two big things that were in the face of significant adversity. One is when I played college hockey in the United States. We won our conference championship to make the NCAA tournament for the first time in program history. I had previously been cut by the team back in my freshman year. And then, in my senior year, I was captain of the team. We had an amazing coach. Amazing coach. That's where 'The Who' song comes from. We have footage of this day; it was one of the greatest moments in my life. It was just amazing. Just the vibe and everything. We knocked off a team in R.I.T., that a year later, was going to NCAA Division I. They're already like a really high-end program. We beat them to win the championship. And twice we were on a ten-game winning streak. Everything was just coming together. At the end of the game, students clapping on me. The vibe was very collegiate. Very university, like in the NCAA. It was unbelievable.

The other one that is very close, and I say it's prissy with that because we weren't supposed to win. We were a long shot; we were not even supposed to be as close as we were. So, the other one was when I was playing in Europe. I was playing for a team and we had I think four of our top players, a few games before the end of the year, just get up and leave. Totally ditched the team. It was terrible. It was just a poor way to react and act in a certain circumstance. Just totally left us high and dry. Our goalie was a top goalie, defenseman and two forwards. We just rallied the troops and came together. We're a very short bench but still managed to win the whole championship. It was incredible. That's something I'll never forget just because of the adversity we faced and how we rose to the occasion and still managed to win. I remember cramping up and all the sorts of different things that come with the grind. It's a long season in playoff hockey and stuff.