

## Kelsey Voser

Kelsey is heading into her seventh year with Calgary, AB based International Hockey Academy (IHA) as the programs Head Trainer and Safety Officer. Kelsey is a Certified Emergency Responder and moonlights with Aaron Paramedical as an on-site responder, where she work's rodeos, the Calgary Stampede and volunteers for Calgary Flames games.

JM: What are you watching on Netflix, Amazon, TV, whatever you have right now?

KV: I'm a binge watcher so I'll choose a show and literally binge watch it for like, however long it takes me to finish it. So, I'm currently binge watching 'Bones' and 'Desperate Housewives'.

JM: What type of genre do you usually watch? Or does it not matter?

KV: It's usually any type of medical show or like '9-1-1', 'Station 19', or 'Grey's Anatomy', those types of things. There's all the 'Chicago Fire' and those ones. So, that's usually what I go to.

JM: I was going to save this question for the end. But what did you take in school? And how did you eventually get involved with the CSSHL?

KV: So, I'm a first responder. That's what I went to school for, I went to school to get my EMR. I'm currently saving up and planning to go back for my EMT. It's really hard because I don't want to take time off from hockey. And I can't really do both. So, that's kind of why I've been putting it off. So that's what my education is. I've also got certificates in sports therapy and massage therapy and stuff like that. But those were all just online courses.

JM: So, did you play hockey growing up? How did you kind of get involved with the sport?

KV: So, I never played. I'm very, very clumsy. I played soccer kind of, if you can count what I did as playing because I was very bad. I was never a sporty person.

JM: Are you a hockey fan at all though? I know you said you didn't play.

KV: Oh, yeah.

JM: Calgary Flames fan?

KV: Yeah, Calgary Flames and Tampa. I know kind of weird combination, but, yeah.

JM: Especially because they played for the Stanley Cup back in 2004.

KV: That's why whenever I say that people are like, why? I was like, I couldn't even tell you why I just, they're the two teams I like.

JM: If you could do any job in the world that isn't related to medical or hockey even, what would it be?

KV: I've always wanted to be a firefighter. I know that's kind of still kind medical, but if I thought I could do the physical side of it, and I wasn't afraid of heights, that's what I would want to do. That or, a counselor, like mental health counselor. So those would be the two that I'd like to do.

JM: Do you do any mental health training for IHA?

KV: Yeah, I do. I myself, I've struggled with mental health my whole life. I have really bad anxiety. So, I'm very in tune with all of that, not necessarily even just like the sports side of it, but also like the schooling, people and the pressure from parents and stuff like that. So, I've always been an overly sensitive person, I guess.

JM: I'm sure people's stress and anxiety and everything are at an all-time high right now with COVID. So, what's the thing you're most excited to do once the world kind of gets back to normal?

KV: I'm a huge Disney fan. So, I want to go to Disney World or Disneyland so bad.

JM: Have you ever been?

KV: Oh, yeah, I usually go once a year. And the fact that I cannot go right now, literally is the worst thing right now.

JM: That's an interesting answer. So that actually kind of jumps into one of my next questions. What is your favorite place to travel?

KV: Florida, California. Yeah, either one.

JM: Disneyland, Disney World?

KV: I'm not picky.

JM: If you had a dream vacation, one that you haven't been on, where would it be?

KV: I would like to go to Hawaii and go to the Disney Resort. Hawaii is super expensive. So, that would definitely be a dream.

JM: Hawaii has been a pretty popular answer. But everyone says the same type of thing though, it's so expensive to go.

KV: Yeah, like it's just so expensive. It's crazy.

JM: I think I might know the answer to this based on your love of Disneyland and Disney World, but dream place to live?

KV: Probably Florida, California. I definitely would work at Disney. I've considered it before. Definitely.

JM: That's pretty cool. You mentioned your mom and dad, but paint the picture for me a little bit. Family, friends, pets, you know where you grew up, stuff like that.

KV: So, I was born in Switzerland.

JM: Oh, cool.

KV Yeah. My mom is from Vancouver and my dad is from Switzerland. So, we lived in Switzerland until I was about three or four and then moved to Chestermere, AB. So, that's where I grew up. I went to school and all that in Chestermere. I now live in Airdrie. I just got my own little apartment.

JM: Do you go to Switzerland often, have you been back?

KV: I haven't been back. I would like to but I have a little bit of fear of flying. I know it's crazy, because I fly a lot, like, a lot. Like, I'm always flying and traveling. But it's definitely a bit of a fear. So, I think that the distance has kind of held me back a bit.

JM: Yeah, no, that's fair, it's a little different flying over an open body of water.

KV: Exactly.

JM: I get that. So, this one, again, doesn't have to be sport related at all, it could be at any point in your life, but best piece of advice you've ever got?

KV: Honestly, to just be myself. Like to not really worry about what other people are thinking. I know, it's kind of a basic answer, but it's definitely one that I held on closely. I guess it's probably a bit from my anxiety. I've always worried about what other people are thinking of me. Even when I first started working in the CSSHL, I was always worried because I started when I was fresh 18. I felt like I was judged. And I felt like I had to act a certain way. And I just realized that me acting like myself was the best way for people to realize like, 'oh, okay, she knows what she's doing. She's good at her job' and that kind of stuff. So, I've used it with work and in life in general.

JM: That might seem to some people to be kind of a cliché answer, but I think it's a really important one. I think it is something people really struggle with. So, that's a good one for you to have. I know you never played so I'm not sure if you do have one. But do you have a favorite or funniest or most unique hockey memory?

KV: Not really. I have some from my dad and stuff because I can kind of skate, kind of ish. So, when I was little, we lived in Chestermere on Chestermere Lake. So, when I was quite little, we would clear the ice and stuff in the winter. And I don't know if we really count that as playing hockey, but that kind of stuff.

JM: No, that's a good one still. I guess we'll just jump into a little bit of, this will be almost advice for kids, and just asking what's the most common injuries or health mistake you see kids make?

KV: Concussions is the biggest one for sure. I've definitely noticed that is one of the biggest. And the biggest problem is a lot of them think that 'oh, I'm fine', but they're not. And it's really hard, especially when you first meet the kid, right? So, I think that the biggest thing is really getting to know that and making sure that they know that it's not going to just take like, two days to be okay. Ankles, wrists, collarbone you can get surgery for, and there's ways to fix it in the future if you overdo it, but your head you can't really do a surgery and fix it. And that's the biggest thing that I try to explain to them that it's not like an ankle, I can't just tape your ankle. Like, I can't just tape your head, and it's going to be okay. So, that's the biggest thing. So, my advice is to really listen to your body and listen to your brain and know when you're not at your fullest.

JM: That makes sense. Do you ever have a little bit of a dilemma where it's a big game and a player really wants to play and thinks they can push it, but you maybe have to sit them down? Has that happened? And how does that kind of typically go?

KV: Not really. I've had a couple where it's not really a big game or anything. It's just there's a lot of, especially with concussions, there's a lot of it can borderline. Like you can't tell for sure because it's not like an X-ray, you can't just get an X-ray and go 'yes, it's for sure a concussion', right? So, you really kind of have to evaluate. And I think that's the hardest thing, and my biggest fear of not saying the right thing or not holding them back when I should. That's the hardest, right? Because you've really got to kind of just go with your gut and go with how the players feeling. And also go, 'okay, are they going to just tell me that they're fine when actually they're not'. I've always just went with my gut with that kind of stuff and been like, nope. And I'm very much the type of person where if I don't think that they're okay, even if their parents are like, 'no, no, they're fine', and I really know for 100% they are not okay, then I will always tell the coaches that and they've always listened to me.

JM: Yeah, I think it's really important for the coaches to trust the trainers, because obviously, they have the best interest of the players and the team in the long run too.

KV: Yeah and like I said concussions are so hard because it's not like an ankle that certain risks it might hurt but it's not going to make it worse type thing. Or there's ways to kind of help so that it's like if you've got a sprain or something where I maybe don't want them to play, but if they do it's not going to be like your head where you're going to do majorly harm. So, it's kind of explaining that to them, which they don't always understand. And then I'm the big bad wolf.

JM: So, CSSHL programs employ full time health people, whatever their title is at each academy. Do you feel like that's really beneficial because it allows you to track kids on a day to day basis as opposed to only seeing them every third or fourth day depending on when practices are?

KV: Yeah, I think it's really important. More than anything, I think it's just important because then I get to know the kids. I've done even for other teams, where I fill in and they might get a hit to the head. And I just don't know if this is them acting different, or if this is them normally, right. So, I think it's really important, because then you kind of get a feel to know their pain tolerance. Because there's some kids that they will not budge with anything, right? Like, they'll be like completely fine. They've had major hits, and they're okay. And then all of a sudden you see something and you can tell and they're like crying or something like that where you know, okay, it's bad. So, I think that is honestly, in my opinion, that's the most important reason to have this because we get to know them. And then there's also just that level of trust, where they just seem to be more open. So, I think that to me, that's the most important thing.

JM: That makes sense. I actually do have one follow up question to that, then. I think a lot of people might not understand how the trainer's kind of work in the CSSHL. Like you said you've worked for other academies, could you maybe explain how your day to day goes, weekends, then obviously programs have more than one team, so, what that kind of looks like, this is kind of how the league typically works.

KV: Yeah. So, I mean, luckily for us, we don't have as many teams as other academies but what I usually do is I will pick for myself, usually for the full year, one team and I will stay with that one team. And then the other team, I'll do whenever I can. So, whenever we would travel to wherever the other are, that academies trainer would always be my person that I would contact to help out with trainers and stuff. And so, kind of with every academy I have a contact person where I'm like, 'hey, can you help us out in this and whether it's you or somebody else', obviously, because everybody's busy. And then there's also certain places where it's kind of hard to get a trainer to go there. So, you have to either send someone, or you're searching really hard. So, it's just also getting to know where the different locations are. And knowing 'okay, it's easy to find people here or there we are going to want to send someone because there, you're not going to find anybody'. But that's kind of my way that I go about it is I have like my specific person, which is usually the head trainer of the team, who I can ask for help.