



HOCKEY CALGARY

Executive Director Report May 2020

This report provides a topline summary of the major initiatives from the 2019-20 playing season within Hockey Calgary, and the full hockey community.

COVID Update

This hockey season was cut short on March 13, which forced some changes to the operation. The decision was made to have the staff of Hockey Calgary work from home effective March 23, which they continue to do. The timing of the pandemic coincided with the 'Planning Phase' for the 20-21 season, so for the most part it has been business as usual for the staff.

Currently there are no firm details on how the 20-21 season will unfold. The first decisions will be in the hands of the Government, and then it will move to the Municipalities, followed by the governing bodies of Hockey Canada and Hockey Alberta. These governing bodies are working on plans to re-open as soon as possible and we expect more information in the coming months.

At the local level Hockey Calgary is actively working on plans for 20-21 such as:

- Lobbying to get arena facilities opened sooner – Hockey Calgary is partnering with the Calgary Arena Association, Calgary Ringette and Canalta Figure Skating to develop 'Return to Play Protocols'. We want to see facilities open sooner rather than later, on a limited scale, to ensure we are playing in the fall. HC believes it will be a phased approach and we need to start phase 1 (skill based only, and in small groups) as soon as possible
- Subsidy Programs – HC is working with the Flames Foundation, Member Associations, and other funding groups to develop a subsidy program for those families in need
- Return to Play – HC will be developing 'Safety Protocols' for players, coaches and volunteers so we can ensure the safety of all those involved with hockey.

Hockey Canada Update

- Naming Convention Change for Age Categories for 20-21 Season
 - o Initiation – U7 (Timbits)
 - o Novice – U9
 - o Atom – U11
 - o Pee Wee – U13
 - o Bantam – U15
 - o Midget – U18
- Implementing Atom (U11) Pathway for 20-21 Season, with goal to expand to other age categories in the coming years



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Hockey Alberta Update

- Combining of 3 AAA Leagues into 1 League and 1 Governance Model
 - o New League to be called Alberta Elite Hockey League (AEHL)
- Introduction of and M15 (U16) AA League
- Non-Body Checking Leagues mandated across Alberta at Bantam (U15)
 - o Tier 4 and below is now NBC in full province
 - o Aligns to Calgary and Edmonton programs.
- Removal of Provincials at the Atom(U11) Age Category

Hockey Calgary Update

Registration

- 14,197 players registered this season, -1.7% VYA
- Concern is that declines were at younger levels of Initiation & Novice
- Trends in Association sizes remained the same
 - o Large Associations continued to grow
 - o Small Associations continued to decline

Boundary Review

- All Community Associations agreed to continue review process this year, with the goal to have a target Association size of between 900-1100 members
- A great deal of meetings and discussion occurred throughout the year
- Recommendation on new boundaries was approved by the Operations Committee on April 13, and provided to the HC Board
- HC Board approved this recommendation on April 27
- Currently members are exercising grandfather rights, with new boundaries to be in place for the 20-21 season

Leadership Day sponsored by Calgary Flames & Calgary Hitmen

- The 3rd annual Leadership Day was held in November
- Over 800 players attended this 1 day conference
- Guest Speakers included; Canadian Armed Forces, Flame Personnel, Cavalry Personnel and motivational Speaker Leo Barbe
- Current Pandemic may challenge our ability to execute in the fall

The Future of Minor Hockey 2.0

- Conference to discuss the future of hockey held in February
- 200 people participated to discuss how we can improve
- Keynote Speaker Matt Symes gave an extremely engaging presentation on change and why it was necessary for the growth of the game
- Hockey Canada & Hockey Alberta Representatives also presented
- Some of the ideas generated were utilized to build the model for the new League Structure for the 20-21 season



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New League Structure Pilot Unveiled

- Sub-Com made up of key Association members worked throughout the season to develop a new format for upcoming season
- Highlights include:
 - o Shortened seeding round (5 weeks)
 - o Longer Regular Season that starts in early December
 - o Implementation of Atom (U-11) Pathway
 - o Revised Tournament Policy – pilot to allow ‘in town’ tournaments during regular season
 - o Pilot to schedule minimal # of Timbit Games
 - o Pilot to schedule 1 age category on ‘set days’

Rink Board purchased for 11 Facilities

- Flames Foundation graciously donated funding to purchase boards to improve the functionality of ½ ice hockey
- Most novice games were scheduled in these facilities
- Received very well by all who participated

Development Initiatives

- Hockey Calgary Multi-Sport Camp
 - o Hockey Calgary partnered with the Calgary Kangaroos to offer a multi-sport camp in August 2019. Atom and Peewee camp participants experienced skills focused on ice sessions followed by an introduction to the game of Australian Rules Football, commonly referred to as ‘Footy’.
- Timbits Learn to Play
 - o A staple program each year, Hockey Calgary ran 360 incoming initiation players through their Timbits Learn to Play camp.
- ‘Change It Up’ Tournament
 - o Hockey Calgary hosted the first ever ‘Change It Up’ Tournament. Unlike a traditional tournament, the on-ice focus was on skill development, rather than games. The 2 day tournament featured 4 on-ice sessions. Each day started with a skills session led by WHL Skills Coach Dean Seymour. Day 1 concluded with a SAG session where teams competed against each other in a variety of Small Area Games. Score was kept and referees were present to add a competitive element. The final ice time was a traditional hockey game where players applied their newly developed skills. Of course, common tournament elements were part of the experience with a swag bag, pizza party, and custom dog tag at the end of the event.
- Align Your Mind Goalie Development Clinics
 - o Hockey Calgary partnered with Align Your Mind to offer 3 free mental performance clinics to goalies aged peewee and older.



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- Hockey Calgary Coach Night Series
 - o Sponsored by Coach-Mate, Hockey Calgary started the 'Hockey Calgary Coach Night Series' to offer coaches with an opportunity to develop and learn from several renowned coaches. Speakers included Dean Seymour (WHL Skills Coach), Bert Gilling (Head Coach, MRU Cougars), Carla MacLeod (Head Coach, Edge Women's Prep), and Steve Hamilton (Calgary Hitmen). Some nights included both off and on-ice components, while the Steve Hamilton night was an exclusive Pub Night Edition at Hudsons Canada's Pub.
- Grow the Game – First Shift and Break the Ice
 - o Hockey Calgary continued to offer 3 First Shift sessions that saw 135 kids experience an ice hockey program for the first time. In addition, the Calgary Saints and Hockey Calgary partnered to run a 'First Shift style' grow the game initiative in the northeast part of Calgary. The program was a big success with over 40 participants.
- Jungle Jamboree at the Calgary Zoo
 - o Hockey Calgary Partnered with the Calgary Hitmen the Calgary Zoo to offer the first annual Jungle Jamboree at the Calgary Zoo. Four lucky teams from the Calgary Flames Community House League got the opportunity to play 'pond hockey' style 3on3 on the mini outdoor ice

Major Events

- EMHW - 41st annual edition of this went was held, as per usual, it was one of the coldest weeks of the year, but a great event as usual, with 58 new champions!
- Subway City Championships – we came close to completing the season, but fell 10 days short. In the end, all the teams who earned the spot on the A side of the tournament were declared champions (basically a single knockout format). This was not ideal, but the best we could do. Medals and hats were distributed to teams in a 'drive by' process at Max Bell Arena
- Timbit Jamboree – Unfortunately, this event was cancelled at the last minute due to the COVID outbreak. All teams were provided their gifts and we are hopeful we will be able to play this again next season.
- First Shift – continued to run 3 sessions in partnership with Hockey Canada and Canadian Tire, in an effort to expose more players to the game
- Breakfast Television Event – Held in October, an atom event with teams playing on TV in AM prior to school
- Ultimate Host – HC partnered with Tourism Calgary to create the Ultimate Host tournament, this pilot was played at Seton arena and had 8 teams involved
- Timbit Day at Dome – Timbit teams received discount tickets to go watch the Hitmen play. Lots of excitement and lots of noise



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- Novice Day at Dome – New this season, select teams got to participate by selling the most Hitmen Ticket packages, they then played a game on the Saddledome ice
- Officials Appreciation Day – A thank you and celebration to the officials who work hard to keep our game safe. This year there were guest speakers and some on ice training for the up and coming young officials.
- FESP Golf Tournament – Cancelled due to pandemic

Officiating

- Continue to work closely with CZRC on official development
- Continued with official survey, look to modify for 20-21 (app based)
- Launched a mentorship program at Novice level for new officials
 - o Senior official on ice for early part of season

Flames Foundation Support

- The Calgary Flames continue to be major supporter of Hockey Calgary
- Provided nearly \$500K in funding over the past season, for rink boards, FESP, House League Sponsorship, Leadership Day Sponsorship & Novice Jerseys

Thank You's

- Hockey Calgary could not operate without the key volunteers and leaders who make our program great, a special thank you to the following:
 - o League Governors & League Chairs
 - o Coaches & Managers
 - o Officials
 - o Association Leadership team and boards
 - o Outgoing Presidents
 - o Outgoing Board Members
 - o Calgary Flames & the Foundation

SUBMITTED: Kevin Kobelka, Executive Director – Hockey Calgary