

Halifax Hurricanes Ringette Association

President's Report – 2025–2026 Season

This past season was one of growth, transition, and resilience for the Halifax Hurricanes Ringette Association.

From new athletes stepping onto the ice for the first time to returning players continuing their development, it was encouraging to see our community come together in support of our athletes and the sport of ringette. As always, our success is built on the time, effort, and commitment of our coaches, volunteers, and families. I would like to sincerely thank everyone who contributed throughout the year.

Season Overview

The Hurricanes continued to deliver programming across multiple age groups and levels of play this season.

Overall registration remained stable, with **195 athletes registered compared to 192 in the previous season**, reflecting continued interest and engagement in the association. While total numbers held steady, the composition of the association continues to evolve, with strong growth at younger age levels and increasing pressure at the intermediate divisions.

We saw meaningful growth at the entry level, finishing the year with **53 participants in our FUNDamentals program**, up from 39 the previous season. This growth reflects the ongoing efforts of our volunteers in delivering **Come Try Ringette sessions**, expanding our **equipment rental program**, and offering flexible registration options to reduce barriers for new families.

The continued success of our **two-phase FUN1/FUN2 registration model** also contributed to this growth, with **22 new participants joining during the winter session**, demonstrating the value of maintaining accessible entry points into the sport. The program also evolved to include a **Fun 1 and Fun 2 format**, allowing athletes to begin participating in jamboree-style play and better preparing them for transition into U10.

At the team level, we iced:

- 2 U10 teams

- 2 U12 teams
- 1 U14 Tier 1 team
- 1 U16 Tier 1 team
- 1 U19 team
- 2 18+ teams

At the U10 and U12 levels, we saw strong engagement and continued development. Both divisions welcomed new players while benefiting from returning athletes and coaches. The U10 program emphasized foundational skill development in a positive and supportive environment, with participation in local and Maritime tournaments.

At U12, growth was particularly strong, with registration increasing significantly year over year and enabling the formation of two teams. This reflects the success of our junior development pipeline and the continued rebuilding of participation following earlier declines.

Athlete Development and Achievements

This season provided many notable achievements across all levels of the association.

At the junior level, we are proud to recognize that **Team Lamb captured the U12 C Provincial Championship**, a significant accomplishment that reflects both athlete development and coaching commitment.

At the intermediate level, our teams demonstrated resilience and competitiveness throughout the season. The **U16 Tier 1 team** achieved notable success by winning the Shediac Cap-Pelé Tournament. The **U14 Tier 1 team** showed consistent development and resilience throughout the season, gaining valuable experience through participation in events such as the **Memramcook High Performance Jamboree** and the **Atlantic Ringette Championships**.

At the U19 level, athletes faced early roster and goaltending challenges but continued to adapt and compete with determination throughout the season. We also recognize those Halifax athletes who represented Nova Scotia at the U19A level and achieved success at the Atlantic Ringette Championships, bringing home a gold medal.

Beyond competition, athlete development remained a key focus. The association delivered **well-attended U10 and U12 development programs during both Fall and Winter**, along with offseason training opportunities including skating development, goalie programs, and combined U14/U16 sessions. These initiatives reflect a strong commitment from athletes and families to continued growth beyond the regular season.

These efforts were further strengthened through a restructuring of programming leadership, including the introduction of dedicated Director roles for **Junior Programming (FUN through U12)** and **Intermediate Programming (U14 through U19)**. This structure supports stronger alignment across age groups and a more intentional, cohesive athlete development pathway.

Financial Overview

The association remains in a stable financial position. For the 2025–2026 season, HHRA generated a **surplus of approximately \$9,400**, with a year-end cash position of **\$42,800**.

This outcome reflects careful financial management in a year that included several pressures, including:

- A **shift in registration toward younger age groups**, impacting overall revenue levels
- Continued investment in key areas, including a **significant one-time investment in new jerseys**, along with expanded equipment rental inventory.

Maintaining affordability while investing in program quality will remain an important focus moving forward.

Operational Highlights

The association continues to rely on the strength and dedication of its volunteers, including coaches, team staff, board members, and event organizers. Their collective efforts ensure that our athletes have the opportunity to participate in a positive and supportive environment.

Coaching is a critical strength within the association. This season, HHRA was supported by **27 dedicated coaches and 6 junior coaches**, along with additional on-ice volunteers. All coaches were fully certified and compliant with Ringette Nova Scotia requirements, reflecting a strong commitment to safe sport and athlete development.

The association's operations were further supported by strong communication practices. Our Communications Director managed the association's website, social media platforms, and messaging channels, ensuring timely and consistent communication with members and the broader community. These efforts supported registration, fundraising, development programming, and event promotion throughout the season.

Fundraising and special events also played an important role. Initiatives such as **SportSweep raised over \$6,100**, while the **Gary Field Tournament generated approximately \$3,375 in net proceeds** for the association.

This collective effort across coaching, communications, fundraising, and administration reflects the increasingly coordinated and systems-based approach to delivering programs within the association.

Key Challenges and Transitions

While there were many positive outcomes this season, several challenges required thoughtful decision-making and adaptability.

Prior to the season, the Board made the decision to release U16 athletes who did not wish to pursue the Tier 1 pathway to Nova Central Ringette. This was done to ensure athletes could access an environment aligned with their development goals. In many cases, this resulted in improved competitive balance and a more positive experience for players.

A similar challenge occurred at U14, where a Tier 2 team was not viable. Harbour City Lakers supported these athletes by integrating them into their program, ensuring continuity of play.

As a result of these situations, the association experienced a **loss of 20 athletes**, highlighting both the challenges at intermediate levels and the importance of regional collaboration in supporting athlete development.

Midway through the season, the association also experienced a leadership transition with the resignation of President Jared Doucette. His contributions over the past three years—including strengthening financial stability, advancing programming, and improving governance—have had a lasting impact on the association. On behalf of the Hurricanes community, I would like to thank Jared for his leadership and dedication.

Following his resignation, I was appointed to the role of President and would like to thank the Board for their continued support throughout the transition.

Looking Ahead

As we look ahead, it is important to take a clear and balanced view of both our strengths and the challenges that will shape our path forward.

While growth at the FUNdamentals and junior levels is encouraging, **ongoing challenges at the U14 and U16 levels** remain. These reflect a multi-year trend impacting team viability, athlete retention, and program stability.

Registration projections indicate continued strength at the U10, U12, and U19 levels, while **team formation challenges are expected to persist at U14 and U16**, reinforcing the need for proactive planning and structural solutions.

The association also faces **increasing financial pressures**, particularly rising ice costs, which continue to impact affordability.

Coach recruitment and retention remains an important priority. While we benefit from a dedicated group of volunteers, many teams rely on parent coaches, and access to structured development opportunities remains limited. Expanding both recruitment efforts and coach development—including dedicated on-ice training opportunities—will be critical to sustaining program quality.

Beyond the association, broader **system-wide challenges within ringette**, including inconsistent approaches to tiering and competition structures, continue to create uncertainty at the regional level.

Despite these challenges, the continued growth in our junior programs provides a strong foundation. Building on this momentum will be key to strengthening our intermediate divisions and ensuring long-term sustainability.

As we look ahead, the Board remains open to exploring both **short-term and long-term collaborative and structural solutions**. We are committed to engaging with neighboring associations and Ringette Nova Scotia to support **sustainable programming, strong athlete development pathways, and a positive experience for all participants**.

Closing

In closing, I would like to thank our Board of Directors, coaches, team staff, junior coaches, volunteers, officials, and families for their ongoing commitment and support.

The strength of our association continues to be rooted in this network of dedicated volunteers, whose contributions span coaching, team operations, fundraising, communications, and event delivery.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize a few individuals who are stepping away from their roles this year.

Cory Alexander, who has served as Director of Coaching for the past two years, has been a longstanding member of the association and a former Board member. Cory's commitment, mentorship, and support of both coaches and athletes have had a lasting impact on the Hurricanes, and we are truly grateful for his many contributions.

Darryl Cameron, who has served as our non-parent U14 Tier 1 Head Coach for the past two years, along with many years of service in roles including Director of Player Development, Director of Coaching, and various coaching positions. His leadership and dedication to athlete development have had a lasting impact on the Hurricanes.

Alicia McDade, who has served as Communications Coordinator for the past two years, played a key role in ensuring clear, consistent communication across the association. Her work supporting our website, social media, and member communications has been instrumental in keeping families informed and engaged throughout the season.

Sarah Furlong, who served as Fundraising and Special Events Coordinator this past season, brought creativity and energy to the role, introducing new ideas and enhancing the experience of our events while contributing to the financial strength of the association.

We thank each of them for their time, dedication, and the positive impact they have had on our community, and we wish them all the best moving forward. Their contributions have helped strengthen the foundation of our association and will continue to benefit our athletes and families in the seasons ahead.

Most importantly, thank you to our athletes. Your enthusiasm, resilience, and love of the game remain at the heart of everything we do.

This season demonstrated both the strength of our community and the challenges we must continue to address together. We look forward to continuing this work collaboratively as we shape the future of ringette in our region.