

BMHA 2023/24 Year End U13 Director Report

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This year we had a significant growth in the number of U13 mixed league players as compared to 22/23 season. Hockey Canada states that 80% of kids the quit organized hockey, quit in the u13 division. In the 22/23 season we had 37 (two teams) kids register on non AA teams and in the 23/24 season we had 65 (four teams) kids registered on non AA teams.

Unfortunately we did not have enough registered goalies for four teams. In fact we only had one. Our solution was to have the u13 female goalies dual register, and apply to Hockey Saskatchewan for a goalie concession to have multiple goalies AP to multiple teams. Feedback allowed the female goalies to provide more opportunity for their development, which should be welcomed by any goaltender or goaltender parent.

The A team tryouts were open to all players that signed up. Outside evaluators were hired and placed kids in groups. They provided a group of the top 20 plus a group of the next 5. The coaches had to pick the A team from the two groups, but were not allowed to pick a player outside of those two groups. The STEP team draft was done using a ranking system at the start of the year on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest rank players. Coaches were only allowed to sign up in pairs and any other additional team staff (asst coaches, managers, etc.) would have to be drafted. This eliminated multiple coaches ending up on one team prior to the forming of teams. We used a standard snake draft with drafting order randomly pulled. In the draft the level 4 and 5 ranked players had to be divided equally amongst the three STEP with the 3-1 ranked players being drafted based on team needs (coaching staff, managers, defense, forwards, etc.). This resulted in 3 very even teams with games against each other close all year.

The season went well with all 3 teams having to shuffle their games due to the goalie situation. This resulted in some moving of games. STEP has indicated that next year for all STEP divisions, there will strict parameters around cancelling of games with associated fines or not permitting the game to be moved at all. Other wise the league play went well.

The A team booked their tournament schedule and exhibition games for the year. The A team lost out to Warman in provincials. Both the A team and the STEP teams had the opportunity to host a home tournament. The Black Aces decided not to have a u13 division this year and as a result the home U13 A tournament in March was a great thought by the team managers.

There were some discipline issues and complaints this year amongst both A teams and STEP teams. Other than one issue the complaints centered around playing time for certain players and reflection around team expectations. Based on coach surveys, this was indicated on all teams and not isolated to one team or coach. Future learnings would include coaches better outlining player expectations around practices and playing time. This should be clearly outlined in the first parent meeting. Parents should also be provided the zero tolerance policy at the start of the year as some of the issues were also around parents not adhering to the zero tolerance policy.

All coaching surveys for both A and STEP teams had 80% or higher positive results around player development and creating a positive environment. A U13 checking clinic was offered at the end of the

year by Tyson Wuttunee. This clinic had rave reviews, and I received multiple texts and emails about how great the clinic was. So thank you Tyson, as well as the parents for providing positive feedback.....we will be bringing Tyson back!

Overall, the year had some challenges and some bigger than others. Hockey is not just about the game of hockey but about life skills. Dealing with adversity, success, and unforeseen challenges to meeting the expectations and commitment to your coaches, players, and team. Look forward to the 24/25 season. Have a great summer!