

BATTLEFORDS AAA SHARKS REPORT – submitted by Jeanne Gilchrist, Director April 22, 2022

As I am reflecting back on the 2021-22 season it is with gratitude for everyone who contributed to the continued success of our organization. We supported and followed SHA's safety protocols regarding COVID-19, working them into our programming, focussing on providing an elite hockey experience. We were able to uphold our vision statement "...dedicated to helping enthusiastic and competitive young women achieve the highest level of hockey. provide the opportunity, coaching and positive team environment for young hockey players to develop into outstanding young women."

We were able to participate in a regular season. Our "normal" was different than a few seasons back, but our coaching staff and players stepped up. Ricci Girolami, Brent Schneider, Danielle Girolami and Kennedy Harris, along with Miranda Wiese as trainer were able to provide guidance, instruction and support as the players navigated the season. There were measurable and attainable goals for the players. The coaches worked to help each player be both their best personally and as a teammate. Tammy Girolami was a great asset to our team as liaison with the schools and as our COVID Team Rep. Dana Salewski and Deb Hockley co-managed the team this season. They met the challenge of the job with enthusiasm and a practicality that made everyone else's jobs much smoother. Roger Blaquiere, as our scout continued to be out and about at many different arenas during the winter, always on the lookout for possible future team players. Billeting continues to be an important component of our programming. Steph Green, as our co-ordinator and our amazing and caring billet families help to make this experience positive and fun.

Board Meetings, whether our own Sharks Board, BMHA, SFU18AAAHL League, and Hockey Sask were all held virtually. Meetings were always well attended and that perhaps one of the upsides of the last year. People were less afraid to embrace technology as it was for a time the only option for connection.

We turned some extra ice booked at the Civic Centre in August into an opportunity to have some fun with a Grassroots Developmental Skate. Jetta Derenoski was able to join us on the ice with several of our players to assist with drills and games. 40 girls in U7, U9, U11 from 17 different communities attended. As time permitted, we were able continue during the season to have the players help out with several of BMHA's Female team practices, tournaments and skates. The Sharks are great role models for the younger players. If you can see her, you can be her, pops to mind. At most of the home games we had younger players recognized as Junior Sharks. They were able to be in the dressing room, help Ricci give some last words of advice to the players and participate in the game openings. The girls were from BMHA and several of the surrounding MHA's. We continue our commitment to growing female hockey in the North West.

We are all aware of the reality that the province is short approximately 1,000 referees. We chose to help create awareness with our Celebrating Female Officials Night at our last regular season home game. Barry Schrader, RIC, SFUAAA18HL did a great job of encouraging the female officials who attended to keep reffing as there are many opportunities for advancement.

My fellow board members, Carolanne Pylypow, Patricia Meiklejohn, Ashley Rafuse, Steph Green, Noel Kingwell and Kyle Kellgren, contribute a depth of both hockey knowledge and life experiences that provide a sound base for all our decisions.

It was perhaps our year-end banquet where we gathered to celebrate, in person, that the energy of a successful season was felt by all who attended. We have a quote in our Growth Model "You Never Lose. You Either Win or Learn." It goes without saying that as a team, we always strive to win each shift, each period and ultimately each game. There is so much more to the 5W-22L-2OTW-1OTL record of the regular season. As Ashley Rafuse has commented, "Our program continues to grow and improve. We have advanced our training both mentally and physically, we have consistent coaching practices and support from both inside the program and outside in the community at large".

In conclusion Ricci's recent interview with Battlefords Now perhaps best sums up our season.

We competed with every team we played and in the playoffs we took one off of Swift Current, so the series went to four out of five [games]. So overall I thought it was a good season," Girolami said. "Our rookies held their own and really competed throughout the year and we finished strong."