**U 18 A Team Report and Recommendations**

The U18A team had a successful season coming to an end in the Provincial Finals. The team consisted of players from all three years of eligibility who were committed to playing a level of hockey to push for their own growth and development. At the start of the season the team had some growing pains learning how to play a higher level of hockey. The players had to learn a team game and the many details that are needed to be successful in the higher levels of hockey. The players were committed to the team and putting in the work to learn what it takes play a higher level of hockey. The players learned a lot throughout the year and played very well resulting in a successful playoff run.

Being an A team, we had no league to play in but were able to find many exhibition games and tournaments to fill our schedule. We played in tournaments in Hague, Macklin, Regina and were able to host our own very successful 8 team tournament. We then won two rounds of Provincial playoffs before losing the provincial final to a strong team from Assiniboia. The growth of the players in their understanding of the game of hockey and the details needed to be successful was remarkable this year and would be one of the highlights of our year.

I understand not everyone was happy with how the U18 division was set up this year. I do believe that providing an opportunity for players who wish to play at the highest level they can to continue to learn the game and what it takes to improve was worth this opportunity this year. I do believe that the players who have been committed to minor hockey for many years deserve an opportunity to challenge themselves and strive for the opportunity to play at the highest level they can achieve which can lead to more opportunities for them in the future, especially with U18 being a 3-year eligibility age group.

Recommendations-

* Need to have a clear idea of teams in division and numbers of players for each team before teams selected.
  + This year the start of the year was confusing as a coach not knowing the number of teams in the division (1 A and 1 house or 1 A and 2 house). The A team was selected with the premise that there would be two other teams so we limited the numbers selected to leave enough players for two house teams, then the next week it was decided that there would be only 1 house team which left players without a place to play when we had space on our roster still. A clear understanding of the teams and number allowed on each would help in making a successful start of the year.
* Coaching development
  + I understand that finding volunteer coaches is very difficult, the time commitment and extra things that come with coaching makes it hard to find volunteers. I do believe that there is an opportunity however to develop a coaching program to enhance coaches understanding of the game and the things that players should know at each age level. We found that the players were limited in their understanding of various things about the game of hockey that they should have learned by U18 being through a minor hockey program. I think that having the opportunity to have A level teams throughout minor hockey would help with this development as well.
* Continuation of the A team
  + I would recommend minor hockey to continue with the A team at the U18 level. Players who have been committed to minor hockey for many years should have the opportunity to play on a team with other committed players who want to develop and improve to be able to play the highest level of hockey that they can.
    - It provides players with the opportunity to have to play a team game with other players their calibre.
    - It provides an opportunity to players on the house team to take on leadership roles and have more opportunities to develop themselves without players there who would traditionally dominate the play and puck possession.
    - With U18 being 3-year division there is plenty of opportunities for players to develop over the years to be able to move up to AA or AAA opportunities.
    - I also believe that having the U18A team will keep some players engaged in hockey longer as I know some players were very frustrated with house teams in previous years and may not play without this opportunity as they want to play with players who are committed to playing the best hockey they can achieve.

Overall, we had a good year of growth and development for the players on the team.