

2019/20 Annual General Meeting:

President's Report

Rob Whitehead - President

Another successful season for the members of the Barrie Women's Hockey Association (BWHA) has come to a close. The season was full of accomplishments at all levels and was building towards an exciting finish for many teams. Unfortunately, the season came to a disappointing and abrupt end for everyone, due to the current Covid-19 health crisis.

The strength of the BWHA has always been its grass roots players and volunteers, within our House League program. Players and parents at the youngest levels continue to create a stable foundation for our association. Our competitive levels of hockey continue to be the beneficiary of our strong House League program, providing a spring board for players and coaches to develop and move up to a higher level of hockey. By providing exposure to females, of all ages, to the sport of hockey and offering an avenue for them to join in the game, the BWHA has seen its registration grow. It is our hope that providing opportunities to these female players, along with a safe and enjoyable environment for them to develop their skills, they will continue to play the game, long after their minor hockey days are behind them. I truly believe that those before us have done a terrific job of instilling these fundamental beliefs deep inside our association. The proof of this is that we are starting to see the 2nd generation players entering our association. Females who have played in the earlier days of our association, now have their daughter's participating in female hockey. These females are also volunteering within the BWHA and paying forward, through their volunteerism, the opportunities they were afforded at a younger age within the female game. This is the true measure of a successful association. To accomplish this, it takes an enormous amount of coordination and volunteerism each and every year. I would like to thank those who have come before us, for their efforts. Without them, we would not be here today. I would also like to extend thanks to our current BWHA executives, volunteers (convenors, coaches, managers, trainers on ice helpers), players and parents for working together to make a lasting impact.

I would also like to recognize and thank the local business community, who provide sponsorship funds our HL and Competitive teams. Without you and your contributions, females in our community may not have had the opportunity to play and the "Thank You" cannot be overstated. You have made a difference in the youngest within our community. Please take a moment to review the list of sponsors on our website www.bwha.com and remember them when you consider your next purchase. Local businesses support your local community—take the time to reciprocate. Along with local sponsorship, Tim Hortons and McDonalds offer a national hockey sponsorship that the BWHA is a beneficiary of. Through the Timbits program, Fundamental and Novice HL players receive jerseys, socks and promotional items each season, thanks to Tim Hortons. McDonalds provides sponsorship through its AtoMc program for HL Atom players, who also receive jerseys, socks, coaching materials and promotional items each season. These national sponsors have been an integral part of Minor Hockey across the country for many years and we extend our thanks to them for their generosity.

To the BWHA executives: I am thankful that I get to volunteer beside 16 other executives, who offer their energy and countless hours organizing the season, so that females can play the best sport in the world. The positions these executives hold, arguably, are some of the most thankless roles an individual can take on. Each executive strive to do their best, be professional, diplomatic and fair with every decision made. While perception can often be that the executive or an executive member may have their own agenda, as a board we have leaned on neutral advice, on many issues from various leaders in our community and abroad. I am extremely proud of how our executive operates, communicates and facilitates the female hockey opportunity to our members. I truly believe that each executive member is involved, for the betterment of the BWHA and its members. It is their way of giving back to the game they played as a child and/or giving back to their community by organizing the largest minor sport and perhaps activity in our community.

To our Convenors, Coaches, Managers, Trainers and Team Staff: Thank you for being involved; without you we have no leadership. Through your volunteerism, you put in a commit a huge amount of your time both in and outside the arena. If you even make a small impact on your players, they will continue to play this game for years to come and hopefully follow in the footsteps you have left for them. Your efforts don't go unrecognized and they are truly appreciated.

To our Game Officials (on and off the ice): Thank you for your efforts. We can't play the game without you. You are appreciated even though there are times when you feel you may not be. You don't make up the rules; you just apply them to the game. We need you and we respect you for the job that you do.

To the Parents: Thank you for the countless hours you spend getting your daughters to and from the rink. Thank you for the hours spent in cold arenas and airing our smelly equipment. Thank you for entrusting the BWA with your hard earned income, which allows your daughter to play the sport of hockey. Your years spent within the sport of hockey are some of the best years you will ever have. Enjoy each moment spent with your child both inside and outside the rink. Enjoy the time you spend in the car and those parent daughter chats. Time goes by very quickly and believe it or not, you will miss the weekend games, the weekday practices and yes, even the early morning games at tournaments. The wins and losses become irrelevant and forgotten, but the memories and friendships you will make during these years will remain and hopefully last forever.

To our Players: You are the luckiest athletes because you get to play this great game. I challenge you to be the best athlete you can be. Take no short cuts in practice "practice like you play". Compete to the best of your ability each game. Doing this will allow you to be proud of yourself, regardless of the outcome. I have always believed that children who participate in team sports, learn valuable life skills. They learn to work with others. They figure out how to communicate and cooperate with their teammates. They learn to take direction and implement it into their personal and team success. These athletes experience team experiences and spirit that promotes accountability, responsibility and sportsmanship. They develop the ability to accept the highs and lows in gamesmanship and day to day life, with grace and humility. Best of all, these lessons stay with them into adolescence and adulthood, which can be nothing short of positive and hopefully allow them to make their way through life in a constructive and productive manner.

The BWA's mission is provide an opportunity for all females to play hockey in a safe, healthy and supportive environment, which are necessary to facilitate player and team development. We are committed to develop skilled, productive players, by fostering in all our players the desire to pursue personal excellence. The BWA has continued to grow each and every year and with just over 800 organization members, playing female hockey from Fundamental through Senior Competitive levels. Again, I stress that none of this could have been accomplished without the countless volunteers. The BWA was founded on the strength of its volunteers and without you, our members and female players would not realize the opportunity to play this great game.

I am proud to be a part of the BWA and it is my privilege to represent the BWA in my role as President. I truly love this game and I love being at the rink, in almost every capacity. The energy that our BWA members exude is infectious and I hope that never changes. Even with the accomplishments of this past season and those from the years before, we need to continue to work hard and make each year a bit better than the past. In order to accomplish that, we continue to ask our members for their involvement and support. Thank you for being in attendance for the 2019/2020 AGM. I wish you and your family good health and safety during this challenging time. I look forward to seeing you around the rink next season.