

2023-24 U13 Division CMHA Report

Well, the 2023-24 CMHA hockey season wasn't our easiest – being down two rinks legitimately sucked! This past year required a lot of compromises and flexibility, but I am happy to report that CMHA, and especially my U13 coaches, managers, players, and parents, all worked extremely hard to still make the season as great as possible. It might not have been the exact season we had planned back in September, but if our post-Covid world has taught us anything, we're good at innovating and are willing to do just about anything to keep on playing this amazing sport!

This year, there were 68 registered players in the house program, spread out over 4 teams, including 10 female rec players. These four teams were helmed by some excellent coaches, who volunteered countless hours on the ice, and then spent many more driving to Canal Flats and Marysville for practices. A big thank you to our head coaches Jason Nosek, Bradley Martin, Tyler Birkham and Jordan McKee, as well as to their team managers Kim Eagles, Daris Kiele, Jackie Smithson, Avery Hulbert and Jody Jacob. Thank you as well to the many assistant coaches who worked so hard with the kids week after week on the ice.

Due to the Memorial and Kinsmen Arenas shutting down, our U13 evaluation weekend was postponed a few weeks at the beginning of the season. But once we were able to get the kids out on the ice, the head coaches participated in evaluations and tried their best to make four even and competitive teams. The teams had to then quickly turn around and participate in the U13 East Kootenay League tiering tournament which resulted in Team Martin and Team McKee being in a different conference than Team Birkham and Team Nosek. After some scheduling hiccups, the season officially got underway. And although I know many families found the U13 EK League schedule to be a bit of a grind this year, overall, the result was some good, competitive hockey. The issue became that with only one rink serving all of Cranbrook, every game was virtually an away game and boy, were there **a lot** of them!!!

Sadly, the U13 House Division was unable to host a home tournament this season. But all the U13 teams attended various tournaments in BC and Alberta, and the results were spectacular, with some of the wins being:

- U13 Female Bucks winning silver in Salmon Arm;
- U13 Royal Bucks (Team Martin) winning silver in the Wild in the Rockies Elk Valley tournament and gold in the Pincher Creek tournament;
- U13 Silver Snipers (Team McKee) winning gold in Creston and bronze in Fernie;
- U13 Red Rebels (Team Nosek) winning silver in Fernie.

As for our U13 Rep teams, both had successful years. The U13 Bucks attended several tournaments throughout the season, winning bronze in Trail, silver in both Revelstoke and West Kelowna and gold in Glen Lake. They attended Tier 3 Provincials in Aldergrove where they placed 10th. As for the U13 Kootenay Avalanche (note: unlike the older Kootenay Avalanche

teams, the U13 Kootenay Avalanche teams falls under the umbrella of Cranbrook Minor Hockey), they were welcomed back into the SCAHL (South Central Alberta Hockey League), where they played in the South Conference, coming in 4th out of seven teams. They also came in 7th at the Tier 1 Provincial Championship in Vernon.

Overall, despite a bumpy start to the season, CMHA players had a fun, challenging and rewarding season of hockey. A huge congratulations to all the kids (and parents!) on their resiliency and hard work – your commitment to play this sport despite having to travel for the majority of games and practices was admirable! I look forward to seeing our players and families back in the rink this autumn.

Thank you,

Courtney Magro
U13 Division Head
Cranbrook Minor Hockey Association