

Hockey Regina Inc
Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes
Tuesday June 5, 2017

Attendance:

Larry Wees (Chair)	Rachielle Thackeray	Kevin Baron
Joanne Merk	Rick Hagglund	Ross Johns
Christie Bjolverud	Geoff Thachuk	Mark Burton
Ian Jones	Todd Taylor	Trevor Mitchell
Scott Tresek (guest)	Jon Golden (guest)	Corey Terry (coach mentor)
Blair Watson (Staff)		

Regrets:

Brad Hunt

1. Call to order

Larry called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

2. Minutes

MOTION: To approve March 21 and May 23 minutes. Moved Mark, Seconded Ian.
CARRIED

3. Business out of minutes

- Evaluations
 - Female – tabled until next meeting
- Team Selection
 - Female – tabled until next meeting

4. Female committee response to SHA closing borders (Appendix A)

- Jon, Scott, Corey and Kevin went over the HRI Female committee response to closing the Regina borders.
- General discussion on the SHA Motion
- Currently the HRI does not have an opinion on the motion
- Larry asked Kevin to have the Female Committee to bring recommendations to the HRI Board to take to SHA

5. Next Meeting

Strategic planning - June 19 + 21
Board meeting – June 27
7:00PM @ HRI

Hockey Regina

Female Committee

Presentation to the HRI Board

- **Seeking support from The Board to overturn/modify SHA Motion to close Regina**

History

There is history in female minor hockey programs in the surrounding areas of Regina.

Declining numbers have forced the female programs to fold. Female players are forced to

- Play on a coed team in the closest centre
- Play on a female team as close as possible to the home
- Quit hockey

The HRI female committee that was struck in the spring of 2014 had a mandate to assess the current state of the female program in Regina and surrounding areas and propose programming that would increase the number of females playing hockey and provide a program that was sustainable and successful, with the intention of then increasing retention.

The female committee presented evidence for dissatisfaction and failure in the existing programming, proposed a structure for positive change and provided measurement tools to assist in continual evaluation of positive advancement. SEE final proposal document from spring 2015

Studies and research are endless, cited in the proposal, and are the foundation for building the structure for the program changes and long term goal to build to an optimal environment within which a female athlete can develop.

There is now a movement in sport which disallows female athletes to play on a male team, if the sport can provide a level of play in which the female can excel on a female team. A female athlete's development should not be solely focused on the development of the sport but of the whole person and the social, emotional and physical developments that need to be taken into consideration when implementing programming regulations.

As documented in the final proposal, spring 2015 many of the program changes were modelled from the Canadian Programming guidelines of the 'Long Term Athlete Development Model'.

The goal of the female committee was and remains intact. To provide continual evaluation, discussion, troubleshooting and programming recommendations that provide an environment to increase registrations, advance development to be consistent with Canadian standards in female hockey in every age group, provide programs for increased female coaches, managers, and officials and provide coaching development opportunities to advance coaches knowledge in female programs at all levels and age groups.

In light of the regulation that was passed recently by SHA, SHA has stated they want to encourage development of female programs across the province. The female committee is very excited to work with SHA to see that statement brought to life and support SHA any way we can to develop a female hockey program in every community in Saskatchewan.

In saying that we would propose that we step back and assess the decisions that we are making to provide a platform that ensures that statement is brought to life.

We have many cities, clubs, schools, and provinces across Canada as well as other countries, that are working to execute similar mandates. We do not have to look far to find resources, assistance and guidance to begin forming the building blocks to assist communities to start building female hockey programs.

As stated in the final proposal Spring 2015, the economic, social and long term well being of our society is better served with our females participating in organized physical programming at any level. The value to the sport of hockey economically and increasing the volunteer base is invaluable.

The document that follows outlines the reasons why it is detrimental to put a one year close to the borders and cut off the three years of development Regina has worked so hard to put in place. We are just getting started with phase one and beginning to see the positive changes and commitment to hockey at all levels. As documented in the final proposal spring 2015, we modeled the program after other centers, researched and molded the changes to fit the Regina and surrounding communities with realistic time frames and proposals for continuing change and advancement.

We would like to take the opportunity to focus on female hockey across the province and begin increasing our numbers everywhere at the Learn to Play and Novice age groups, build on a foundation and ensure success for programs across the province.

SHA guidelines contain distances that players must reside in at certain age levels. Peewee is 80 km, bantam is 120 km. All girls within this radius, that had no female team to play on, were able to play in Regina with a release from their respective association.

Some girls opted to remain and play coed which was their right. But at least none were forced to quit or play elsewhere.

Many of the communities that fall within the 80 km radius at the peewee level are "bedroom communities" in which a family member often works in Regina.

Since the change, numbers have increased within the female division at HRI. Many are from outlying communities, but many are also from within the coed division, as the families now realize that their daughter can play at the level she belongs in, whether it be A, B, or C. Withdrawing from the SSFHL has reduced travel for female teams, which was also one reason why families had earlier opted to stay in the coed division. Younger players are moving back over as the coaching credentials on the female side continues to improve as well, with the influx of new numbers. The pee wee division alone had a 33% rise in numbers.

The New Motion – Seemingly Out of Nowhere

The motion itself is a potentially a great idea, but needs to start at the grassroots level, to give time to associations to develop and implement a plan, with guidance from SHA. Simply “forcing” the jurisdictions to make a program will not have the desired effect of growing the female game. Some jurisdictions simply won’t, which could force girls to play coed, or travel great distances to play on a female team. They may create a program, but it may not meet the needs of the players themselves, ie: 13 girls in an area, so they make a bantam team. But three are very skilled, seven are average, three rarely show due to distance and school/work/boyfriend. The three skilled will more than likely opt out of playing in the SSFHL Bantam A division with this team and join the Weyburn or Yorkton Midget AA team instead. The three that rarely showed, will still rarely show. The seven average players basically have no team to play on. *This assumes that the Association mandated the females playing coed to play Female.*

Kelly McClintock’s email to Mrs. Johns of PSMHA states that HRI and Saskatoon *desired* these changes to be made, in order to mirror the Minor side (coed) of their Associations. To treat the female program and the Coed program “the Same” is problematic however. Simply due the smaller numbers on the female side, the programs **can not** be treated equally. Fairly, yes, but equally, no. By virtue of having more numbers, the coed division can do certain things that the female division can’t. ie: the drafting of teams. Cookie cutter decisions are not in the best interest of growing female hockey.

Regarding the statement Kelly McClintock made that Saskatoon and Regina both expressed this desire to have borders closed so their focus becomes the females within their own communities, similar to male, the female committee (which has the growth and development of female hockey always in mind) *never even discussed* this issue. Not once. The HRI Board, never voted. Why would SHA make such a substantial change to a program without receiving input from stakeholders, or developing a plan? Floated the idea to some people is not enough to make a decision of this magnitude.

For example, the motion states that the City of Regina will now be closed. This is what the coed side looks like. However, the coed side has several teams in the outlying areas, and several different tiers for players to play on. There are zero on the female side. Creating one is merely a bandaid solution to a bigger problem. A boy in Lumsden may not have a Bantam AA (or even A for that matter) team to try out for in Lumsden. But he can try in Prairie Storm. Then the next place, and the next place until he runs out options (within km). A girl that wants to play Bantam AA from Lumsden, simply can’t. There are no teams other than Saskatoon and Regina, which are now closed to her. Midget AA calibre female players will have nowhere to go. With work and school they will have to drive 100 km to play or practice on a Wednesday, as opposed to driving into Regina like they had been? Maybe Prairie Storm makes a midget A team, but does that benefit her??

By the Numbers

Another point that is confusing is that the "Greater Area of Saskatoon" will be closed also but it will include the RM of Corman Park. Corman Park includes Aberdeen, Clavet, Asquith, Colonsay (64 km), Dalmeny, Delisle, Dundurn, Langham, and Whitecap Dakota. They lose Warman and Martensville, but still keep the remaining areas. How is it possible that the two centres are treated differently in this context? We've already established that female and coed can't be the same due to numbers, that having them the same on paper doesn't fill the practicality aspect of it. All this does is allow Saskatoon to continue doing business as usual, while Regina gets stunted. A Saskatoon Coach of a Pee wee AA team shared with the committee that he loses no one from his team, as had no one from those areas. They expect very little attrition due to the motion. The actual population of the City of Saskatoon is 265,000. The Greater Area is over 300,000. *The SHA mandates the number of teams that Saskatoon will have in the AA coed division.* This number of teams is greater than what Regina is mandated to have because the Regina city population is 221,000. For census purposes, the Regina "Metropolitan" area has 241,000. This area includes the RMs of Edenwold, Lumsden, Sherwood and Pense. Milestone is furthest at 57 km.

SHA does not mandate how many teams the female division will have.

Saskatoon has six *peewee* female teams, two of which are AA.

Regina has four *peewee* teams, one is AA.

Saskatoon has seven *bantam* teams, one is AA

Regina has three teams, one is AA. So even the two major centres aren't treated the same.

Population Explained

Warman and Martensville were excluded from Motion and are to be excluded from Saskatoon Centre. Warman, pop 11,000, fastest growing place in Canada from Feb 2017. Martensville pop 10,000.

White City pop 4234.

RM of Corman Park excluding Warman and Martensville 8658.

RM of Edenwold excluding White City 4490.

The outlying area of Saskatoon had 72 females registered in all age groups, in hockey OUTSIDE of Saskatoon, Warman and Martensville that played coed. Warman and Martensville have approx the same number of girls playing coed that Moose Jaw does playing female (80s).

Regina outlying areas had 83 girls registered in coed hockey. These girls are playing coed, as there are no female teams in the areas listed. These girls will more than likely remain in coed,

as they had the option to go to Regina, but didn't. White City has 29 girls playing coed across all divisions. Not fair comparison to align White City and Warman together. Nor to expect they move to a female program because you mandated they have one.

Saskatoon's female Comet program is flourishing within Saskatoon Minor Hockey, with the goal of having their own leagues within each division. The bantam A teams play in their own city league already, using the girls from the outlying areas.

Low Numbers

Swift Current area is currently contemplating shutting down their female program in the atom and peewee ranks. They cite travel and the inability to compete with Moose Jaw, Weyburn and Estevan as reasons. If Swift can fail, and Prairie Storm already did, it can be reasonably assumed that Lumsden and Prairie Storm will not succeed after this motion. It is understood that based on numbers, there may be the option of having one female team in an area. But that doesn't mean the girls will choose to play on it, if the family doesn't feel it is the appropriate place to play for development reasons.

SHA cites the low numbers for Bantam and Midget girls in these areas as a reason they want to force PSMHA and LBMHA to start programs. The data that they are using is the list of female player registrations for the outlying areas. This number is skewed for several reasons. First, numbers are zero for PSMHA for example, because they have zero girls registered in bantam and midget coed. This shouldn't be surprising as girls won't play bantam or midget with the boys. This doesn't mean that there aren't females playing, they are playing in Regina, registered under HRI, or midget AA/AAA elsewhere. In years past, Prairie Storm midget AA female teams were comprised of girls from very far away, as well as several girls from Regina that didn't make the Capitals team and applied for release. The only way they fielded a competitive team was to have players from Regina added to it.

Secondly, the highly skilled players play elsewhere in major centres, as they should. The Bantam Ravens team is a feeder program for the Rebels, and possibly the Cougars. Not only that, there are players that played for the Ravens that have signed on Midget AAA teams in other cities. If a girl is good enough to play for the Ravens for her development and lives in Lumsden or Balgonie, she should be able to play at that level. There are NO other options at the bantam level. The closest there is, is for a 13 year old to drive to Weyburn or Yorkton to play with the Midget AA team full of 15-17 year olds. No different than boy's families, there are opportunities that players are exploring in terms of scholarships or junior programs. With the timelines for both NCAA and Sports recruiting as they are right now, Bantam hockey has become as, or more important than Midget hockey now for the elite players. Elite players will always find a place to play - not allowing athletes from Lumsden to come in to Regina to play on a female team may mean that that athlete leaves home to play at a sports school (inside or outside the province). It is not good for the development of our sport to lose players for any reason, but it is especially problematic to have athletes leave the province because we can't accommodate her needs here.

The less skilled players often choose to play other sports, or focus on school, or don't want to travel to other centres. By allowing them to come to Regina, at least they still have the option to play the game they love. Several played in Regina, and allow even Regina to have two midget A and two bantam A teams. Without them, we have one of each. With huge numbers.

Goaltending. We are already struggling here. Especially in the female division. We are in the midst of trying to figure out a way to attract more goalies, and then this motion occurs. This decision effectively makes the goaltending issue in Regina worse, by removing any goalie from outside Regina. There are at minimum, two goalies that will be lost immediately.

Likely Outcome

There is likely to be an opposite outcome than the one being sought. Obviously it can't be proven, but the probability is great. History shows that the programs have failed before, and will likely fail again unless SHA spearheads an initiative to grow the game over time. It is believed that most girls (we have consulted a great deal of families) will revert back to coed, as there is tiering offered, and much less travel. Some families will even (some have and/or are in the process of) move to Regina.

HRI put off tiering for several years as we struggled with female numbers. Finally we have a tiering system in place, with growing numbers (much like Saskatoon), and now that is threatened, as the numbers within HRI will drop significantly.

Outside jurisdictions have females playing coed, because that's where they wanted to play. Will SHA mandate that they now all have to play female hockey? If they do, then HRI must follow suit to make up for the shortfall.

Girls from Prairie Storm, for example, that played female in HRI will go back to their community association and be put on a girls team, that probably won't exist, because the girls already registered there are playing coed, and don't want to play on girls teams yet.

An example of a highly probable scenario based on past behaviours:

PSMHA has 10 peewee aged girls playing in coed PSMHA. Across several divisions, AA (1), A(3), B(3), C(3). HRI has a handful of girls that will be sent back, two of which played A, some played B. One would have to assume that they then have approx 15 skaters and a goalie. But the goalie is very skilled and will play coed AA. The AA skater will continue to play AA. The coed A players will probably try to play A or AA the next season. So you're quickly left with half the number you had, and most of them are the girls that were on female teams in Regina, where they played with like skilled players and were developing. They don't want to play with boys, so now what? It can't be proven that girls will quit, or move, or play coed....but at the same time, you can't prove they won't. We can only look back. "The best predictor of Future Behaviour is Past Behavior" Unless we *change* the behaviour.

Soccer

A huge, growing sport. Any child from White City looking to play soccer can play in the *recreational* White City Futbol Club. Anyone interested in playing *competitive* soccer, should contact "Regina Soccer". There is not enough numbers to support competitive soccer in White City. Why hasn't Sask Soccer forced them to create a competitive stream. Regina hasn't closed its borders and don't force soccer players to travel to Weyburn.

Lacrosse

White City doesn't offer any kids the opportunity to play lacrosse in White City, directing them all to Regina. It doesn't have the numbers to support a team or program. Sask Lacrosse doesn't say, "there are enough players in Regina from White City, Ft Quappelle, Milestone, Lumsden and Balgonie to form a team, so we are making you do it. Develop your own programs. Many teams are made up of kids from outside of Regina because no programs exist for these out of town players. If Queen City Lacrosse closed its borders, players would be forced to go to Weyburn or Yorkton.

The point here is that sports in a development mode or that are in the growing stages, need time, to flourish and succeed in order to spread. Areas that don't have enough players to field competitive programs at all age levels shouldn't be forced to. Just having numbers alone doesn't make the formation of teams a viable option, and almost certainly is a recipe for failure.

The female program is more than likely similar to White City soccer players playing in Regina. If Soccer Regina forced them out, sure they could make a team, but the program would probably fail, as the varying skill levels would be vast on each team. Possibly more important than the varying skill levels would be the varying age levels that would be required to play together. Based on the numbers provided, it is clear that in both the SSFHL and the NSFHL, younger players are being pulled up to play midget so a team can be fielded. Socially, it is less than ideal to have 12 year-olds on the same team as 17 year-olds. Few parents would want their 12 year old in a dressing room listening to the 17 year-olds discussing the parties they're heading to on Friday night and what they'll do at those parties.

Take a moment and be Proud

Hockey Regina should be extremely proud of the steps they have taken towards the future of female hockey development; they have created a place for these girls to play, where there wasn't one. They have given them a chance to play at an appropriate skill level and with players in their age bracket, with all girls teams which will pay dividends in the future. They are helping these girls develop socially. The overriding purpose of this motion is to have outlying communities forming their own female teams. With the format we are currently running, that is already happening. Lumsden is going to be entering a female Novice C team in the upcoming season. Hockey Regina will encourage and support this as it is the best case scenario for all of our girls. We don't need this motion to force this to happen when it is happening on its own, we need time and the education of decision makers involved.

These programs failed before in the outlying areas and we risk that occurring again. Further, and also as concerning, we risk losing the tiered structure of female hockey within Regina, and

reverting to the way it was before with girls of all skill levels playing on the same teams, playing in the SSFHL. All clearly contradicting LTAD and the studies previously presented.

At HRIs last AGM, the President's Report included a paragraph stating the following:

"Building the Female Program

Hockey Regina needs to be doing more as an organization to encourage girls to take up and stay with the game of hockey. The board is interested in seeing a committee develop and implement a marketing plan targeted at the recruitment and retention of female hockey players."

This motion will not grow the game in Regina. It is a step back, leading us exactly where we were a few years ago.

SHA development plan

There has to be a planned three to four year structure/programming initiative from SHA and all the centres to begin with development of new intro to hockey programs at the novice levels and learn to play levels bringing in young females and their families to the sport and 'directing' them to the exciting female league in every center. Start at the young levels and build the game from there. There may be enough girls on paper to create "a team" but not a program. Not yet.

There has to be numbers affiliated with this plan – goals of what we need in each centre to provide programming at all levels of play from recreational to high performance. If the numbers aren't there, we can't force it.

Needs to be marketed to encourage them to play female hockey with the KNOWLEDGE that a female can play at any level she wants all the way up the program either in their centre or a centre close by.

Closing Regina in one year forces them to play female FURTHER away UNTIL EACH CENTRE HAS THE TIME TO GROW THE PROGRAMS.

Grandfather

The players currently enrolled, at bare minimum, need the ability to be "Grandfathered" and allowed to complete their minor hockey in Regina. Girls in Novice that LOVE playing female hockey shouldn't be forced to play coed back home if they don't have a team. Girls that are in the tiered program shouldn't have to play up or down a tier to merely fill out a roster. They should play where their skill and desire places them. Midget girls shouldn't have to be forced to drive an hour to play elsewhere, or even worse, quit because they don't have a team to play on. Pushing 12 and 13 year olds to play with 17 year olds makes no sense. That's what will happen in areas pushed to try to make this happen. There is nothing reasonable in place for players to go to yet. SHA needs to plan ahead, set up mentoring for associations and build programs from the ground up.

Following Saskatoon's Lead

Saskatoon's model is working. It is growing the female game at a high rate. They have a different structure, but the numbers of females playing as compared to Regina is about 650:429. They have produced a senior national team player, and two members of the U18 National Team members (from Clavet). Regina is beginning to increase in numbers and in this last season, Regina showed it was getting closer to Saskatoon in both numbers and competitiveness. Coaching is improving. Girls want to play on the female side as female teams are competitive at all levels. Players are developing at their own pace, within the appropriate levels.

Saskatoon's model didn't just become successful overnight. They had an opportunity to develop it over several years and it has seen success that is unmatched anywhere in the province. There are, in effect, two full teams of Midget AAA calibre players currently playing in the SFMAAAHL. Saskatoon has supplied the league with almost one quarter of the league's players. A lot of these players are from outlying jurisdictions, that were allowed to play in Saskatoon Comet program as they grew up and developed. Had they been unable to play, growth may have been stagnant.

WE NEED A NEW MARKETING INITIATIVE TO GROW THE NUMBER OF FEMALES PLAYING HOCKEY from OUTSIDE Sources (not from coed).

Allow Regina to keep the "Metropolitan Area of Regina" inclusive of RM of Edenwold, RM of Lumsden, RM of Pense and RM of Milestone. This would mirror Saskatoon. This would allow the bedroom communities where families work in Regina, play soccer in Regina, go to gyms in Regina, pools in Regina etc, an opportunity to play at the appropriate level with all female teams if they feel that is best for their daughters. This can be while the outlying areas develop their programs from the ground up.

Rethink current program and structure

To increase numbers at the bantam and midget levels, there are other options that should be explored before simply closing borders and forcing development where it has already been unsuccessful.

- Reduce the amount of teams in the SFMAAAHL from 8 to 6. That would create 40 more midget AA spots across the province. In turn creating more spots as it trickles down to Midget A and Bantam.
- Make it an actual midget league. Stop allowing bantam aged players into the league. Let them develop in bantam. This will give opportunities to older girls be able to play midget AA or AAA, instead of quitting because they feel they have no options.
- This will strengthen the Midget AAA league. Strengthen the Midget AA league. Possibly create and strengthen a Bantam AA league.
- The North Sask League has several overage players, allowing them to play while still in high school. Great for development. The South Sask league rarely allows overage

players, opting for younger girls. Allow more overage players while they are still in school. Develop develop develop.

Winners/Losers

We need to ask ourselves (SHA and HRI) who the losers will be if this attempt to force female development in smaller centres fails. It will be The kids. The families. No research has been done into the issues that we are aware of. Forcing someone to do something, yields, at best, short term success.

Examples:

- Piepers. Two daughters. No female team or program in Duval SK. Refuse to play on nearby boys team as they were both victims of bullying and their parents did not feel they developed at an effective level. They jumped at opportunity to play in Regina. The parents have indicated a strong possibility of both girls quitting hockey if they are not able to play in Regina.
- Petford/Schlamp. Both very skilled, will likely play Bantam AA Ravens as first year. Second year will have to play midget AA in Weyburn or Yorkton, or Midget AAA somewhere.
- Duke. Slightly above average player. Will play Peewee aa capitals, then where? Boys bantam? Parents both work in city of Regina.
- Midget girl with parents uninvolved. How does she get to Weyburn or Yorkton?