

U7 Director's Report – 2024/25 Season
Redcliff Minor Hockey Association
Submitted by Janae Ulrich, U7 Director

The 2024/25 season was an exciting and successful year for the U7 division, with 24 registrants and incredible growth displayed across the board. We witnessed tremendous progress in skill development, confidence, and teamwork. While one first-year player withdrew early in the season as the family felt their child wasn't quite ready for team participation, they expressed a strong desire to return next season. We look forward to welcoming them back.

This year, the U7 Grizzlies were divided into two teams: **U7 Blue** (12 players) and **U7 White** (11 players). Both teams consisted mostly of first-year players, with a few returning second-years and just a couple of third-years who stepped up as wonderful role models. Each team proudly included two young female athletes, which was fantastic to see as we continue encouraging the growth of girls in hockey.

The teams regularly shared practice ice and game slots, maximizing ice time and promoting camaraderie between both groups. Our primary focus remained on nurturing a love for the game through fun, skill-based learning. Many players progressed from simply shuffling on the ice to skating confidently. Skills like falling, standing up, puck control, and basic positioning improved significantly through structured, engaging drills. The use of cross-ice and half-ice formats allowed for more puck touches, faster decision-making, and stronger individual development, while also emphasizing teamwork and inclusion.

A sincere thank-you goes out to our volunteer coaches, both new and returning, who completed Hockey Canada certifications and showed up every week with energy, patience, and a team-first mindset. They instilled the importance of being a good teammate, not just a good player. These lessons are invaluable at this early stage of cognitive and emotional development. Redcliff Minor Hockey Association also hosted a successful "Intro to Hockey" session for new players, which was well attended and helped ease many first-time skaters into the season with confidence.

Our U7 players participated in three tournaments this year, including our Home Tournament, held February 7–9, 2025, and two away tournaments in Irvine and Coaldale. These events were major highlights for the players and their families. The home tournament was a great success thanks to the incredible efforts of our team managers, Caitlin and Shaye, our dedicated tournament organizers, coaches, generous sponsors, and all the parents who stepped up to help make the weekend run smoothly.

Off the ice, team bonding and fundraising activities played a key role in strengthening our hockey community, allowing time for the teams to spend time together off-ice, building comradery, establishing friendships and meaningful memories. From hitting the streets looking for bottle donations, "Skate with the Tigers" event, where our players scrimmaged with the WHL players and enjoyed treats and autographs, to attending a Medicine Hat Tigers game with a

pre-game pizza party at the Redcliff Rec-Tangle. Our Christmas party in Ralston was another highlight, with bowling, gym time, swimming, and a movie for all the players and their families.

Looking Ahead

As we plan for the 2025/26 season, our focus remains on building a strong foundation for our youngest players by continuing to develop early hockey skills in a positive, inclusive, and fun atmosphere. We aim to increase registration through community outreach and initiatives like our “Intro to Hockey” event, “Bring a Friend” as well as potential future partnerships with local schools and preschools to introduce the game to more families.

To support the long-term success of our program, we strongly encourage more parents to consider getting involved with Redcliff Minor Hockey—either by joining the board or by participating in one of our sub-committees. The passion, energy, and diverse perspectives parents bring are vital in helping shape the future of our association. When we lead together, our players thrive.

End-of-Season Awards

U7 Blue

- **Most Valuable Player** – Wesley Skagen
- **Hardest Working Player** – Lincoln Paiement
- **Most Improved Player** – Wade Anderson
- **Sportsmanship Excellence** – Harlow Courtoreille
- **Leadership & Dedication** – Waylon Robinson
- **Best Teammate** – Nash Zmurchyk

U7 White

- **Most Valuable Player** – Sawyer Hazzard
- **Hardest Working Player** – Jocelyn Wallin
- **Most Improved Player** – Remi Pederson
- **Sportsmanship Excellence** – Avery Andreas

- **Leadership & Dedication** – Koehn Ulrich
- **Best Teammate** – Bennett Sleeking

Best of luck to our graduating players as they move on to the U9 division! I'm looking forward to the 2025/26 season and the continued growth of our association. It has been a pleasure to work alongside so many dedicated leaders, families, and volunteers, all united by a shared commitment to the growth and success of Redcliff Minor Hockey players.

In kindness,

Janae Ulrich
U7 Director
Redcliff Minor Hockey Association