

2023-2024 Redcliff Minor Hockey Association – President’s Report

The 2023-2024 season saw a mixture of challenges and successes. While a primary focus of community connection and new player/family engagement brought forward plenty of new initiatives and events, we weren’t without our shortfall in once again not being able to have enough players to host a U18 Grizzlies team. This remains a top priority for 2024-2025. Here are details on some of our 2023-24 changes, events & highlights:

- The start of the 2023-24 season had coordinating challenges as we began with ice in Medicine Hat due to our significant rink upgrades at the RecTangle, and many of our early season ice times at the Big Marble Go Centre.
- Our 3rd annual Learn to Play/Learn to skate program returned in 2023 with 34 participants. We are now seeing approximately 10-12 additional kids register from this program yearly.
- 2023 saw the arrival and first season of all our teams in brand new Redcliff Grizzlies team jerseys. The approximate \$25,000 cost of new jerseys for the association was raised through the hard work of our dedicated volunteers who worked hard and fundraised to get sponsors to help cover the costs of these new jerseys.
- A new equipment program in partnership with the Redcliff Lions Club called the “Redcliff Lions BIG Assist” began this past year, and it provided starter hockey kits for some of our new players/young hockey families.
- A Redcliff Community Movie Night (Mighty Ducks) was hosted in the RecTangle parking lot in early October, and while it seemed to draw a lot of interest initially, the event was somewhat disappointing due to weather factors and spectator turnout.
- Pooty’s Poutine came on board with us in 2023 as our new third-party concession operator replacing Tully’s. They provided great results for us as our concession sales and positive feedback all improved significantly (they are returning once again for the 2024-2025 season).
- The Tim Horton’s RMHA Smile Cookie week was a positive event allowing all Grizzlies teams to participate and all funds raised were donated to the Root Cellar Food & Wellness Hub.
- For association fundraising, our main fundraiser the RMHA Cash Raffle did very well for Redcliff Minor Hockey, and Shelley Wright won our grand prize.
- Near mid-season a new bring-a-friend program called “Tim Buddies” ran in December and it was sponsored by our local Tim Horton’s Medicine Hat. This new program was developed to both try to attract new young players to grow our association, but also be more resourceful with some of our “Christmas break” ice time which sometimes sits vacant. Overall, for it’s first year this initiative was a success for community engagement with our association. A big thank you to the volunteers who stepped up to help in the operation and administration of this event.
- Come playoff time, our U11 teams both lost out in the first round, while our U13 T3 Grizzlies and U15 Grizzlies also both fell in the quarterfinals. Our most positive playoff performance this past season came from our U13 T5 Grizzlies who came up just short in the U13 Tier 5G Championship.

Following the conclusion of the season a handful of exciting events were hosted, and we hope that they can go a long way towards making a difference in the future and the growth of our association:

- Firstly, the RMHA “Girls Night Out” on February 28th was an amazing event! With special guests and mentors from the Medicine Hat College Rattlers women’s team and the SAHA U18 Female team, an incredible experience for female hockey players was created involving on-ice instruction and camaraderie... and it even included a fun pizza party and social for all involved. A huge thank you to our coordinators of this very incredible event.

- Next up, in mid-March our association hosted a U18 Grizzlies ID Camp from March 12-14 for Redcliff zone players born from 2007 to 2010. Of course, the goal in this ID camp was to continue to try to build the foundation of what we plan is the return of a U18 Grizzlies team after a few years of absence. The success and potential of us having a U18 team return in the future is based on two primary factors, one being obviously the numbers to declare a team, and the second being the willingness of everyone eligible to work together to make it happen. We are always open to suggestions and will continue to strive to host U18 hockey in Redcliff again.
- Finally, we finished things off with what might just be one of our most successful and well received events of the season... our 1st Annual Redcliff Minor Hockey Alumni Game on March 16. With over 60 alumni registered, we adjusted our plan to have two separate games in an "Under 30" Alumni Game and a "30 & Over" Alumni Game. Over \$1150 was raised by our Alumni Games towards the Brandon Primeau Fund and Redcliff Minor Hockey!! Great job everyone.

In closing, I just want to say thank you to our dedicated core of executive volunteers for all of their efforts (and I'm sure what amounts to hundreds of volunteer hours given), to ensure that we represent our association and our community members in a positive way while we build on the successes and growth we've achieved over the last several years.

We will shortly begin to renew our working discussions with Medicine Hat Minor Hockey regarding our Memorandum of Understanding and player movement guidelines, while prioritizing the best interests of our association and our membership as a whole.

And lastly, I would just like to thank everyone who volunteered as our Grizzlies coaches, managers, team staff and off-ice officials this past season. We definitely would not be able to do all of this without everyone's contribution, so thank you again for all you do!

Please feel free to reach out to me at any time with any questions, thoughts or suggestions,

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