



**Waterloo Ringette Association  
July 8th, 2020  
Annual General Meeting**

**President's Report**



Dear Members,

Our 2019-20 season of ringette in Waterloo has come to a close in a manner that I am sure nobody will ever forget. Although the end was abrupt and a major disappointment to many, I take comfort in knowing that our ringette family members adhered to our government regulations and remained safe. We will return to the ice soon!

I would like to extend a huge thank you to EVERYBODY who helped make this season a success! It really is astonishing what a team of passionate, energetic and dedicated people can accomplish.

In reflecting on the past season, our overall registration numbers were down roughly 10% as compared to the past 3 years. Our bunny program continues to be popular with enough registrants to sustain a team going forward at the age group. This upcoming season is going to be a challenge for us for player recruitment and come try ringette, but I am confident that the association will find ways to be creative. Building up our bunny registration base by 50-100% will increase our ability to offer regional and provincial level programs through the years.

We had 43 participants, up from 28 last year, who took advantage of our FREE registration program. Many of these players also took advantage of our equipment loan program, which practically emptied our inventory. We continue to be fully committed to providing as much support as we can to assist every player who wants to play ringette in Waterloo.

Although the season ended early, our regional and provincial teams completed all tournaments and almost all of league play. Each player enjoyed the rewards of success, advanced their on and off ice skills and continued to experience the fun of ringette. Waterloo Ringette continued working with all stakeholders to build teams that offer a balance and the best possible playing environments for all to enjoy. We continued working with our neighbouring ringette families to find a place for everybody!

Our coaches and bench staff are the foundation to our teams providing the leadership, mentoring, encouragement and support to all our players under all situations. Waterloo Ringette is extremely thankful for the passion and dedication from well over 100 volunteers, including many U16 and U19 players assisting on the bench at the U8 - U14 divisions! We also recognize that the path to coaching contains numerous developmental requirements, which require a commitment of the bench staff to achieve. Last year, Waterloo Ringette revamped and simplified how we manage and work with coaches to assist in obtaining certifications. We also continue to provide feedback to our governing bodies to influence and improve the process. We remain committed to the development process as it benefits all those involved in the development and growth of our sport.

Our skills clinics continue to be a cornerstone in the foundation of the development of our young athletes. Waterloo Ringette is fortunate to be in a position to leverage the strengths of our NRL team and this year we continued our collaboration with the NRL players leading a number of clinics. We will continue to focus around the theme "*Skating, Skills and Saving - Waterloo's Triple Threat*".

Our marketing efforts were ignited by fresh energy and a passionate love of the sport. Efforts to engage with our community and neighbouring associations to collaborate on ringette awareness, branding and promotions were outstanding. This year saw investments in signage, redesign of our display cases, partnering with a sportswear company and joint promotions with Kitchner and Cambridge Ringette. We continued to create a buzz out on social media and with the launch of our new revamped website. Just as we were building plans to host a few recruiting events and come try ringette our season ended. These events are simply paused for now and will burst out once we are allowed to return safely.

Our 43<sup>rd</sup> Winterfest tournament was packed and a resounding success. Year over year, our tournament gets rave reviews as being one of the best enjoyed by participants. Waterloo Ringette is very proud of all our volunteers who assisted in planning and running the tournament. Each year, we find new ways to enhance and improve our ability to plan and execute. For the upcoming season, our 44th Winterfest tournament is still on the books and we will move forward to make the best plans we can.

In addition to Winterfest, Waterloo Ringette hosted the 4th AAA Challenge Cup., which according to the Western Region AAA head coach, “was the best organized AAA challenge cup with the best facilities”. We were able to book RIM Pillars for the entire tournament which allowed for excellent viewing and seating for the fans in attendance!

At the board level, our efforts continued to primarily focus on the operations of the association. This year we managed to move the governance needle forward with the adoption of a new Tryout and Player Selection Policy. In addition, our second major accomplishment was the creation of new bylaws that are aligned with and adhere to the new (pending) provincial regulations. Both of these continue to increase transparency of our processes and improve our governance of the association.

For the upcoming season, I see the following goals for Waterloo Ringette:

1. Fostering sport growth of players, referees and coaches through recruitment, development and retainment
2. Neighbour collaboration with marketing, recruitment and player development initiatives
3. Reduce volunteer strain through increase utilization of software

I would like to extend my thanks to everybody who stepped up to volunteer their time, skills and passion to lead and drive our association to provide a sport that our players love - for life!

Mark DeLaFranier  
President, Waterloo Ringette