

Ice Manager Report for the 2019-2020 Season.

Prepared by: Ben Cairns

This was my fourth year as the ice manager for the Waterloo Ringette Association (WRA).

As the ice manager, my primary responsibility is to ensure that Waterloo Ringette's allocation of ice is distributed in a balanced and timely manner for home games, practices, power skating, skills clinics, special events (Come Try Ringette, Christmas skate, etc.) and tryouts. During the 2019-2020 season, Waterloo Ringette used approximately 725 hours of ice (not including away games).

This past season, WRA had 19 teams competing at various age and skill levels. These teams participate in five leagues throughout Ontario (WRRL, WORL, GLRL, SWIRL) or nationally (NRL). Each league builds their game schedules in different ways, with different procedures and timelines. Because of this, like previous years, the game and practice schedules are not released as early as many would like.

Ice Challenges from this Past Season:

The game scheduling for Great Lakes Ringette League (GLRL)

This was the first season for the Great Lakes Ringette League (GLRL). As with most other associations, Waterloo's A and AA teams entered GLRL for league play. In an effort to streamline and simplify the process of building the league schedule, GLRL used some newly designed software. Several factors unique to ringette were challenging to incorporate into the software:

- The desire to schedule two 90 min games within a 3hr block of ice in an effort to maximize efficiency.
- Whenever possible, allow U16AA and U19AA games to be played on larger ice pads.
- The scheduling of double-header travel days. ie: play games in Whitby and in Richmond Hill on the same day in an effort to cut down on driving.

Ultimately, through the use of the software and manual adjusting, the league schedule was created.

Referee Shortage:

Throughout the season, several games were cancelled at the last minute because referees were unavailable. I did my best to reschedule these games within our existing ice allocation, but I did have to purchase several hours of extra ice to accommodate these last-minute cancellations.

COVID-19

As we're all aware, COVID-19 caused an abrupt end to the ringette season on March 14. This had an impact most of WRA's teams, as arenas in Ontario closed. AA Provincials was cancelled part way through the tournament. The Regional tournament and A Provincials were fully cancelled, as were the Eastern Championship tournament and the National Championship tournament. The final two weeks of the Regional game schedule was also cancelled.

Spring Tryouts & Summer League Cancelled:

As a result of COVID-19, spring tryouts and summer league were cancelled. Tryouts will run in the fall, as regional and government regulations permit.

Looking Back:

Overall, even with the challenges listed above, I believe it was a successful year from an ice scheduling perspective. Each team was on track to receive their pre-determined allocation of ice for practices and games as of March 14th. A number of teams did miss a couple of practices and games during the final two weeks of the season. WRA is considering several ways to make up for the missed ice times.

It's a tremendous amount of work to build and maintain the ice schedule for WRA. Finding ways to streamline the process within the association and amongst the various leagues needs to become a greater priority.

Looking Forward:

Undoubtedly, because of COVID-19, the 2020-2021 season will look very different than what we're all used to. WRA is in regular contact with the City of Waterloo and will do our very best to get our players back on the ice in a safe, fun, constructive way, that meets regional and provincial COVID-19 policies.