



Mount Pearl Blades Girls Hockey Program – 2022/2023 Year-end Report

Jeff Brown, MPMHA Girls Hockey Program Director

2022/2023 Season Highlights

- This season the Mount Pearl Blades Girls Hockey Program included two teams in U11 (Tier I and Tier II), U13, and U15 team, along with a strong U9 program.
- Girls U18 was a three team pooled league within the Metro area which was hosted and administered by our Association.

Teams from Girls U11 to U18 participated in the Girls Metro League as well as the year-end Provincial tournament. This included one practice and one game per week for a total of 40 on-ice hours per player.

I would like to thank players, coaching staffs, and parents for their commitment through out this season.

I want to give a special thanks to our Team Managers: Amanda Kelly (U9), Tracey Young (U11), Crista Ivany (U11), Kelly Gosse (U13), and Mark Sexton (U15) – for their efforts organizing, communicating and overall managing their respected teams.

- **Registration numbers:** This season we had 87 players registered in our Girls Hockey program from U9 to U15, this is a **14% growth** rate year over year. (Note: We also hosted the Girls U18 program which represented another 54 players). We had strong numbers in our grass roots program, U9 and U11, a great sign for future years.
- The Female Metro League itself realized growth this season, specifically in the U11 and U13 divisions. The U11 and U13 league were both tiered this season.
- All of our teams participated in a year-end provincial tournament. **Congratulations to the MP Blades Girls U11 TI, U15, and U18 Infernos on capturing gold at their U15 Provincial Championships. The MP Blades Girls U9 Selects also captured gold in their tournament in Gander.**
- There were a significant number of players from the MP Girls program selected for AA and AAA teams.
- MP participated in a committee to form the Don Johnson Girls U15 league of which we had several players from our program participate. Girls U13 DJHL carried on with great feedback.
- Our two U11 teams hosted a 6-team tournament at the Glacier.



- Our U9 Girls participated in the provinces second annual Girls U9 Select tournament held in Gander in late April (winning gold!) Our U9s also hosted a 12-team jamboree late in the season. We also continued with a Metro Area U9 committee which oversaw multiple initiatives for the program.
- Our teams all received, and loved, the new MP Blades jerseys!

Future assessment

- We had two U11 teams, one a younger team, the other primarily second years. Three did move up to U11 from U9 to assist with filling rosters. We forecast one U11 team next season.
- We forecast two U13 teams next season which includes some second year U11s moving up.
- Recommend pooled Girls U18 league however sharing hosting duties with another association (one hour each per week).
- We expect another strong U9 program next season with many players already confirmed to return.

Suggestions and Improvements for Next Season

1. Work with Hockey NL and Eastern Co-ordinator to improve team gradings for Provincial tournament. There were several challenges with this seasons grading including the participation of AAA players outside the metro area.
2. Continue with DJHL for Girls U13 and U15.
3. Continue assessing options to improve the U18 division across metro.
4. Work with other associations to look at ways to attract and develop goaltenders to the Girls Programs. Goaltending was a challenge this season, particularly with the Girls U13 team who did not have a goalie.

We did receive questions from parents on a number of topics. Below is a summary of the feedback we provided. We will look to provide additional clarification early in the season next year:

- **Girls U13 Goalie situation:** Unfortunately, there has not been a female goalie registered for female for the past two years. As an association we have run a number of goalie sessions for players to give it a try. We enhanced our goaltending development programs. The coaching staff would reach out to other associations on a weekly basis to ensure a goalie was available for games. For metro league they were able to make it work. The alternative was no team at all. We opted for this approach. For Provincials, it's a different situation. We could not take from another association, we were declined opportunity to use AA/AAA goalie as it would impact grading. Again, we were faced with do we send a team or withdraw all together. We decided to send a team. We were proud of the Caps U11 goalie and her family for stepping up and committing to the team (goalie was assessed for skill level).
- **Sharing Ice During Practice:** This is common for house league teams, both minor and female, and is reflected in registration costs. All-star teams do have dedicated practice ice but again, they pay a premium for it.



- **Girls U13 Metro League Tiering:** The Female Metro League is the fastest growing hockey program in the province. With it comes growing pains. It is the second year we were able to Tier teams because we had the numbers to do so. It's much easier to grade an association like Paradise or NE who have two teams, one is T1, the other T2. With MP U13 only having one team, they were immediately placed on the fence. At several Metro Directors meetings it came up where would MP land. The feedback was that "MP was the hardest team to play against". They did come out on the losing side quite often, however with the alternate players for DJHL they had, the goaltending situation, and results, it came down to MP competing in T1 or dominating T2. It came to a vote and was determined MP would stay in T1.
- **Provincial Grading:** There is much more to come on this topic. It's been recognized that Hockey NL experienced a number of challenges with grading. Note this is separate from Metro League and tiering. A committee is being established to look at this topic and improve in the future.
- **AA/AAA player participation outside of Metro:** This is an open issue. With the establishment of the DJHL, that Mount Pearl helped establish and continues to support, our AA/AAA players do not participate with house league teams in provincials. For associations outside the metro area they need those players to fill rosters otherwise the team cannot play. This is being worked into the "grading committee" work mentioned above.
- **Impact of Girls DJHL on Association Hockey:** We continue to support the DJHL. With the growth of the game it's a great opportunity for skilled players to play like on like which is proven to be better for their development, and for those who are beginning so that they get more puck touches. We do not view it as "loosing players to the DJHL". They try-out and earn a spot. Note that all other associations have players moving to DJHL so the impact on skill is felt proportionally.
- **U9 players moving to U11 and U13 players moving to U15:** This is a numbers thing. Those players who agreed to move (we leave it up to them although they do get assessed to ensure they can manage it) help us establish rosters. Without them the higher team does not exist. At the House League level we encourage participation and development. Without those players moving up a number of players don't play at all. This is a rule supported by Hockey NL (player moves have to be approved by HNL).

A BIG thanks to our coaching staffs and Team Managers for what was another memorable season for our players. Feedback from parents has been great! Thank you to our office staff and technical director for their support.

Congrats to all year-end award winners and four Provincial Champions. We look forward to seeing everyone back at the rink next season.

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