

FREDERICTON YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

Presented at the Annual General Meeting
Tuesday, June 4, 2024



900 Hanwell Road, Suite 31
Fredericton, NB E3B 6A2
Tel: 506 451-1333
Fax: 506 451-1325
edfyha@bellaliant.com
www.fyha.goalline.ca

FYHA AGM June 4th,2024





BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023/24
Ben Macfarlane, <i>President</i>
Kent Brewer, <i>Vice President</i>
Dr. Travis McLean, <i>Secretary</i>
Josh MacIntosh, <i>Treasurer</i>
Steve Pearce, <i>U7 Division Director</i>
Vacant, <i>U9 Division Director</i>
Scott Durling, <i>U11 Division Director</i>
Mike Gillingham, <i>U13 Division Director</i>
Brittany MacLaggan, <i>U15 Division Director</i>
JP MacDougall, <i>U18 Division Director</i>
Frank Collins, <i>Past President</i>
Staff
John O’Toole, <i>General Manager</i>



ANNUAL REPORTS

Member Forum Report, Submitted by Kent Brewer, VP and Ben MacFarlane, President

A survey was sent out to members, requesting feedback on a number of different topics related to the overall hockey experience of our members and their families. We received approx. 110 responses to our survey request. The responses were represented from the perspective of the various divisions within the FYHA.

The survey was used as an aid by the nominating committee for awards in identifying exemplary contributions from our member volunteers (coaches, managers, etc). Many different names were submitted, which is an excellent reflection of the volunteerism within the hockey community in Fredericton. The survey also provides us with insights directly from members as to what is most important to them with respect of their overall experience within the FYHA.

With respect of our coaches, the overwhelming majority of responses were quite positive. It appears as though for the most part, parents believe that their players' coaches are trying to help improve all players on their teams, they are running efficient/productive practices and that players are being treated fairly on the subject of ice-time.

Survey feedback on the topic of the role of coordinators, schedulers, special clinics, etc was also quite positive.

On the subject of competitive tryouts, this is the area that produced the most mixed responses. For people who felt the process was fair and organized, an equal number of survey participants felt the opposite and a sizeable number of participants expressed no opinion on the matter whatsoever. Further examination on the topic of competitive tryouts will be performed this summer and communication of how the process will work in the fall will be shared before the evaluation process begins next season.

The survey asked participants to provide the board with valuable feedback on the area that they would like to see the most improvement/time spent in reviewing processes and procedures. The top 3 areas that were cited were as follows:

: the evaluation/tryout process

: quality of coaching

: providing more player development opportunities and scheduling received about the same number of responses.

After the new constitution was passed last summer and the initial "kinks" worked out in the division of responsibility between board member versus coordinator's role and delivery of programming, the board spent time in examining many of the topics surveyed this past season. The survey results will facilitate further discussion on these matters, and we are confident that



certain concerns brought up from the membership will be addressed before the kids take to the ice for evaluations in the fall.

General Manager

Online registration for the 2023/24 season opened August 22nd and closed October 2nd. Total number of players registered was 1109 an increase of 64 players over the 2022/23 number of 1045. This was broken down as follows – 183 U7 players, 211 U9 players, 232 U11 players, 188 U13 players, 165 U15 players, and 130 U18 players. Our program consisted of 17 competitive teams and 42 recreational teams. I'm not sure that we have room for any more players!

It was decided to start the U11 competitive tryouts 2 weeks earlier than previous seasons (September 16). It was thought that this would lighten the stress/burden created when everything typically started October 1. It was also decided that the U9 program would also begin early (September 16). This created some confusion and will need to be better communicated to families if repeating the format again for the 2023/24 season. The early start for the U9 group negatively impacted the Brendon Oreto Foundation Hockey camp – we need to look at how we can avoid creating an issue for that group.

With the approval from HNB, FYHA offered the “U9 Pilot Project”. Second year U9 players were permitted to attend the U11 competitive tryout sessions. Nine U9 players were successful at securing a spot on a U11AA/A team. FYHA added a sixth AA/A team to the program to accommodate the interest at that level.

The competitive tryout evaluation process continues to create stress, pressures, and a tremendous amount of extra work for those volunteers trying to coordinate things. A combination of independent evaluators and coach applicants worked diligently to evaluate players fairly. The process needs to be reviewed and updated – and then followed. The change in direction that took place in the middle of the U11 evaluations this year was not necessary, created extra work and stress, and only helped to foster the negative perception of the overall evaluation process.

FYHA partnered with HNB to offer a Neurodiverse Hockey Program. Children ranging from 7-18, with a neuro-disability, were offered the opportunity to participate in bi-weekly on ice hockey sessions. Some FYHA teams graciously provided player support to work with the participants on the ice. Special thanks to Peter MacWilliam for taking on the role of lead instructor for these sessions. The sessions were well attended, and all participants had fun.

Once again, the U18 comp tournament took place in November and featured eight participating teams. The 47th annual Nashwaaksis Lions Club Capital Invitational tournament took place in February – a decision to move away from the March break date proved to be successful. One Hundred and twelve (112) teams participated in the tournament helping to generate a profit of

FYHA AGM June 4th,2024



over \$57,000.00. This season, a decision was also made to combine the U7 & U9 Jamborees on the same weekend in March – 56 teams participated – and all participants had a fun weekend.

FYHA was fortunate to host two First Shift programs during the year. Both sessions sold out providing 90 “new to hockey” children an opportunity to get exposed to the great game of hockey. Over the two six-week sessions, participants were exposed to hockey fundamentals by a group of qualified and committed coaches. Thank you is extended to Joe MacDonald and Brent Wickens for their leadership and commitment to the program – and a thank you to all volunteer coaches!

It takes many volunteers to help run a hockey association with over 1100 participants. A sincere thank you is extended to all coaches and managers that dedicated their time ensuring that the kids had fun. Your efforts are noticed and are greatly appreciated.

I must take a moment to thank the following people for taking on “operations” leadership roles and for going above and beyond to ensure that the 2024/24 hockey season was a success.

Thank you to:

Dawn Estey – U7 Coordinator
Lori Wheelan – U9 Coordinator
Dawne Chedore – U11 Coordinator
Natalie Cormier – U13 Coordinator
Kyle Ogilvie – U15 Coordinator
Kevin MacKinnon – U18 Coordinator
Leslie Paul – Operations Manager
Andrew Wheelan – Equipment Manager
Denny Johnston – Coach Manager
Lindsay Perez – Female Development
Reg Dingley – Discipline

It was a pleasure working with each of you – thank you!

In conclusion, I would like to thank President Ben Macfarlane and each Board member for their support.

Respectfully submitted,

John O’Toole
General Manager



Treasurer

For the year ended April 30, 2024, the FYHA is in a solid financial position with cash of approximately \$58,000 after adjusting for outstanding liabilities and \$100,000 invested in a 13-month GIC maturing in September 2024. Over the past several years we have implemented a fiscal budgeting process to ensure that variations in financial performance are identified and can be dealt with by John and the Board proactively. Membership has continued to grow, allowing us to update gear and provide additional training without compromising our financial position.

The Capital Invitational Tournament was a success again this year. Every year, this tournament is critical to helping the FYHA generate profit. The net profit for the 2024 edition of the tournament was approximately \$57,000. A big thank you to John and the numerous volunteers who helped make the Capital Invitational Tournament a success again this year. This, combined with generous corporate donations and support from various community members effectively helps to subsidize the cost of membership.

Audited statements from the year ended April 30, 2023, are not available for this meeting. We are working with the auditors to answer questions and expect the statements later in June. Appropriate plans will be made to ensure distribution to members.

Prior to joining the Board, I was not fully aware of the vast amount of work required behind the scenes by John, Board members, team managers, coaches, parents, officials and rink staff required to make our hockey season a success. It really does take a community to make it happen. My sincere thanks to everyone involved.

I have enjoyed my first year on the Board. We have made progress on several items this year including investing some of the associated funds in secure investments and managing cash flows throughout the year to maximum interest income. We also added low fee payment options for members that help reduce transaction costs. In the coming year we will be looking to roll out a new registration and payment process to assist with tracking all member registrations. I have learned a lot this year with John's help and found the experience rewarding.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joshua MacIntosh



U13 Division

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the families who chose to play hockey with FYHA this winter. I would also like to thank all our volunteers (Coaches, Managers, Scorekeepers, timekeepers, DJ's, etc.) who help ensure the children have a fun time when they get to play this great game. Without the support of all of you this would not be possible. I would also like to thank Natalie Cormier (Division Coordinator) for her countless hours of organizing all things U13 related. I would also like to thank our officials. Again, things don't happen without your dedication too the game and we appreciate all the work you do.

A couple of achievements to note from the season included:

- U13 C – FYHA Champions – Eastern Trenchless Bandits
- U13 AA – DQ Blizzards & Coastal Graphics Ice Dogs – Earned a birth in the Provincial Championship Tournament.

The FYHA Solicitation of Feedback was a great way to get some feedback and although I didn't receive many emails the ones that I did were very professional, and the feedback was greatly appreciated. A few points to note from the feedback are as follows:

- Scheduling – Would like to see more consistency with times and opponents. Also, minimal ice in February due to special events. Long times between ice times for many of the U13 C teams.
- Possibility of Tiering U13 C like we do in U9? Certainly, something to look at if there is a large discrepancy in skill.
- Teams – do not seem to be balanced. We may have to revisit how we evaluate players. What tools do we use or could we use to ensure balanced teams to keep things more competitive.
- U13A/U13C Teams – Teams struggled to compete outside of the association. Teams were balanced within but struggled vs other association U13 teams.

Again, great feedback from those that took the time to submit.

Overall, I would say that the season went very well and a huge shoutout to all the players for your hard work and dedication this season. We wish you all a wonderful summer and see you again next season.

Yours in Hockey

Mike Gillingham (U13 Director)



U15 Division

I am going to try and use the “sandwich method” here, so I will start and end with the positive. With that, I want to thank the Coordinators, the Coaches, and team Managers for the dedication you have shown this year in U15. Our children would not have the ability to play this sport they love without you volunteering your time. The fact that you put many, many hours of work and brain-space into running this division is not lost on me. Thank you.

Secondly, thank you to the families of U15. I know this was a challenging year in various ways for many of you, and I thank you for your patience, for advocating for your children, and for your understanding along the way.

This year, we tried something new, and ran the division with two coordinators. One for competitive teams, and one to coordinate rec. Based on feedback, I anticipate moving back to the one coordinator model, to ensure consistency and equitable ice allotment.

With the rec division participating in league play with District 3, it allowed the kids to play outside of the city with a more competitive feel. Many of the players in U15 have played against the same kids since they were 5 or 6 so it was nice for them to have the opportunity to play in outlying communities. The struggle that accompanied this was being at the mercy of District 3 for our schedule. This presented significant delays and challenges, and left coaches and parents feeling frustrated. To mitigate the same problem presenting itself next year, we have communicated with District 3 our request for a schedule deadline and proposed having an FYHA member as the District 3 coordinator.

Evaluations- always a hot topic. The lack of clarity and transparency is a clear issue. Families are frustrated with the ever-changing process, and lack of information. Recommendations for next season:

- Clearly documented process, posted on our website, with policies related to missing eval times, injured players, evaluation score breakdown
- Consistent external evaluators for all participants
- Separate evaluation times for “A” level
- A validator (second set of eyes) on the data being entered for each player

Another area of concern, based on member feedback, is the selection of our coaches. A recommendation for next season would be to have clearly documented guidelines on our coaching selection procedure, and to offer coaching development throughout the season. For new coaches at the U15 level, an assigned coach mentor would be ideal.

For rec teams, shared ice practice time at this age level was another area of concern. Playing in the District 3 league puts FYHA teams at a disadvantage with shared ice practices, as the neighbouring communities often have their teams on full ice at least once per week. City of Fredericton ice time availability is not a unique problem to U15, or even to the FYHA, but a

FYHA AGM June 4th,2024



recommendation brought forward would be to limit registration to allow a higher quality service to members.

The positive I will leave you with is on both the operations side, and at the Board level, there is a genuine desire to improve the member satisfaction with our programming. Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback, because it does not fall on deaf ears. We all want the kids to have a positive experience. U15 is a critical age to keep them engaged in a sport that keeps them active, fosters teamwork, and provides an opportunity for accountability. I look forward to positive changes, and hope that by having open communication along with clearly documented processes we keep the kids coming back to play for FYHA in the years ahead.

Brittany MacLaggan
Director of U15



Nominating and Awards Committee (Past President)

Awards

The Nominations Committee has created two new awards this season to recognize outstanding contributions in specific, high-impact roles for our association: Coach of the Year, Manager of the Year.

Our committee was impressed with the number of nominations and the positive feedback received across many divisions. Nominees ranged from experienced to first-time volunteers. Some coaches prepared individualized reports on players, reviewed videos, etc.; some managers did many little things to make the kids feel like they were in the “big leagues”. Very inspirational!

Just some of the nominees receiving outstanding feedback from families were:

Coach of the Year:

- John Bowles
- Rob Coombs
- Chris Day
- Don DiPaolo
- Terry Francis

Manager of the Year:

- Erin Blanchard
- Ben Conoley
- Jill Flynn
- Chris Frame
- Gregg Smith

It was a difficult decision. Based on the feedback received, we are pleased to announce the recipients as:

- Coach of the Year: Rob Coombs
- Manager of the Year: Chris Frame

In addition to being recognized permanently on our award plaques, these two will each receive a \$250 credit towards next year’s registration!

Thank you to these and all positive contributors, and thanks to everyone noticing and nominating your team leaders. We hope the leadership of these great coaches and managers help inspire others to make the hockey experience fun and positive!



Nominations for Board Positions

The FYHA constitution calls for all Board position nominations to be received prior to the Annual General Meeting. The following nominations were received:

- U7 Director – Steve Pearce
- U9 Director – no nominations
- U11 Director – Joel Leitner
- U13 Director – Mike Gillingham
- U15 Director – Brittany MacLaggan
- U18/U21 Director – JP Macdougall
- (Vice-) President – no nominees
- Secretary – no nominees
- Treasurer – Josh MacIntosh

The nominees listed above will be acclaimed into these roles by Member consent at the AGM. No nominations will be accepted from the floor at the AGM according to Article 7 of the FYHA Constitution.

According to Article 7, where there are greater than three board vacancies, a special electronic ballot election must be held this Summer to fill vacant board positions. If you are interested in any of these roles you should contact John O’Toole for more information.

Lastly, I wish to thank Nominations and Awards Committee members for their help in reviewing awards and nominations: John O’Toole, Brittany MacLaggan, Scott Durling and Steve Pearce.

Frank Collins
Past-President



2023/24 FYHA Volunteer Awards

HNB Volunteer of the Year Award

- Natalie Cormier

Manager of the Year Award

- Chris Frame

Coach of the Year Award

- Rob Coombs

FYHA Division Awards

U7 Division

- Justin Roy
- Justin Bowers

U9 Division

- Jonathan Craig
- Jaclyn Killam

U11 Division

- Mark MacNevin
- Alex Matheson

U13 Division

- Jennifer Nicolle
- Angela Peters

U15 Division

- Troy Massie
- Ross Haché

U18 Division

- Terry Francis
- Jennifer Bishop