



# 2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT

**BEDFORD & DISTRICT MINOR HOCKEY  
ASSOCIATION**

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## President's Message, Jason Hale

Well, the 2020 - 2021 hockey season is over, and I have completed my three-year term as President of Bedford and District Minor Hockey Association ("BDMHA"). It has been an incredible three years and I feel very proud and privileged to be part of such an incredible organization. Over the three years I have tried to focus on making BDMHA the best organization possible. In my role it is important to make decisions that are best for the association and to continuously look for ways to improve and strengthen our organization. Over the years we have tried new things and have been open to any and all ideas to strengthen our organization.

- "If you focus on results you will never change. If you focus on change you will get results."
- "Everything in life is a reflection of a choice you have made. If you want a different result, make a different choice."

I would like to personally thank all the coaches, the players, our Board, and our entire membership for their tremendous support over the past three years.

I attribute our successes to the entire BDMHA team (including coaches, development team, managers, safety coordinators, board, parents, etc.) and our strategy. Over the past three years our strategy has focused on:

- 1) player experience - all players/kids matter
- 2) development – developing all players in our organization
- 3) raising our expectations - high achievement always takes place in a framework of high expectations; and
- 4) great coaches who believe in our BDMHA strategy including fair play.

I want to personally thank Tim Outhit @timouthit and his team at HRM for their continued support of BDMHA. Tim has been a great leader for our community and a friend to BDMHA. Also, I want to thank Shawn MacKenzie and Matt Oxford for their continued dedication and efforts to our association. BDMHA would not be where it is today without their tireless efforts year after year. I feel very privileged to have been President and future Past President of BDMHA and I am extremely proud of our organization, our players, our coaches, our teams, our programs and our brand.

I have had an incredible 3 years with many highlights including: winning HNS's Minor Hockey Association of the Year, hosting Hometown Hockey, two very successful annual tournaments (Jordan Boyd and Noah Llewelyn (thank you Jason F), implementing a 50/50 program (thank you Danielle), implementing a social media strategy (thank you PJ), and many other initiatives that I believe have moved our association forward. Some of the highlights for me over the past three years include:

I am extremely proud of our decision to have more kids playing at higher levels and this has proven to be a huge success. Over the three years we have increased the number of our competitive teams to 20 total teams (previously was 16-17 teams). As we were adding teams our average win percentage rose to 66% compared to a 55% 10-year average. But for me, success is measured in our player experience and not wins and losses. Our 2021 survey shows that 95% of players enjoyed their 2020-2021 player experience and 90% were happy with their player/coach experience. There has been so many good times and great things to remember about the last 3 years, and so many people that have positively impacted our association.

## **Registration and Teams**

BDMHA is the largest minor hockey association in Nova Scotia. This year our final player registration was 1,050 (2020-2019 = 1,112 and 2019-2018 = 1,129). This season we had 22 recreation teams, 20 competitive teams, and 10 Novice teams (2020-2019 – 23 recreation teams, 20 competitive teams, and 10 Novice teams 2019-2018 - 24 recreation teams, 19 competitive teams, and 12 Novice teams). Unfortunately we had a decline in our overall registration primarily due to our Jump into hockey program being paused during the season and a slight reduction in recreation registration.

## **BDMHA Awards**

I want to take this opportunity to share our BDMHA award winners for the 2020-2021 hockey season. These awards will be presented at the beginning of the 2021-2022 hockey season.

- **Competitive Coach of the Year**
  - U11 – Eric Gills
  - U13 – Jeremy Gillis
  - U15 – Scott Steffen
  - U18 – Jamie Moore
- **Recreation Coach of the Year**
  - U11 - Charlie Dunn
  - U13 – Jamie Loughery
  - U15 – Sean Doucet
  - U18 – Darrin Quigley
- **U7 Coach of the Year**
  - Chris Kelly
- **U9 Coach of the Year**
  - Craig Frizzell
- **Joanne Lenihan Volunteer of the Year**
  - Larry MacVicar
  - PJ Makinen
- **Most Promising Referee**
  - Andrew MacKinnon
- **Most Improved Referee**
  - Brandon O'Reilly
- **Most Deserving Referee**
  - Matt Sode
- **Eileen Mader Memorial Award**
  - To Be Determined

I also want to take this opportunity to personally recognize all our safety coordinators who have worked tirelessly to ensure the safety of our players and parents. Their efforts have kept us on the ice and without them we would not have had a season, development or hockey. Thank you to Jason Foster (BDMHA Safety Coordinator) and your entire safety team for your efforts. Without you, there would have been no hockey this year.

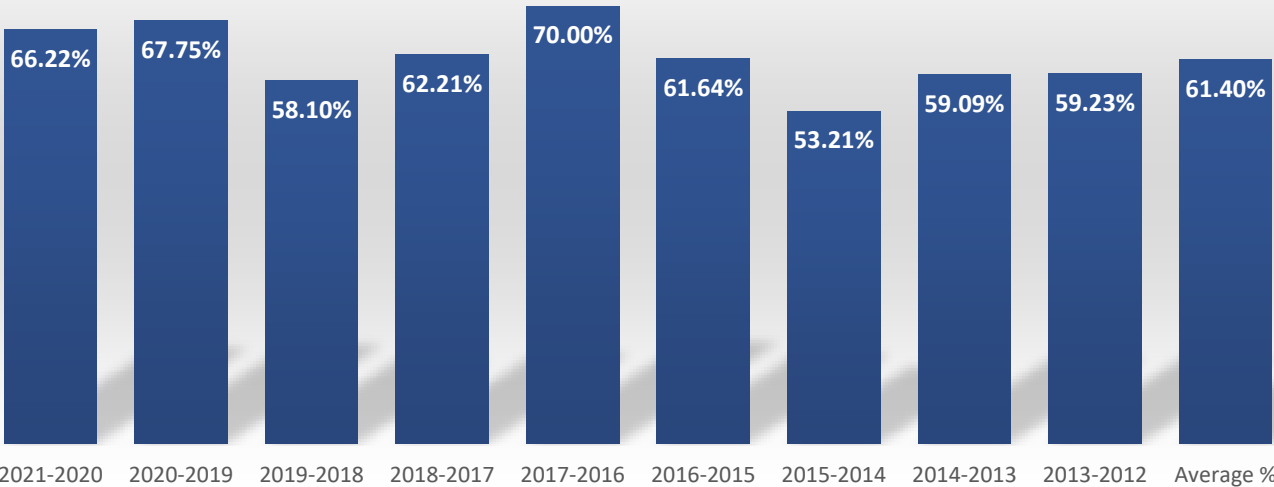
On behalf of BDMHA, our players, our coaches and our members thank you all for your significant contribution to our organization.

## 2020-2021 Survey Results

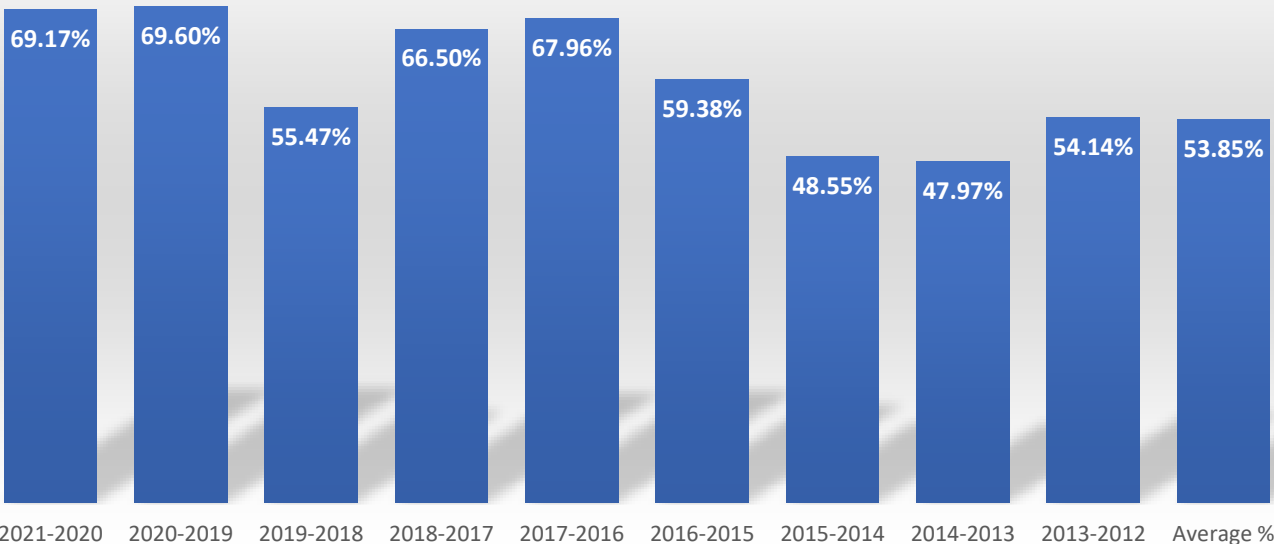
Here are some graphs that I would like to share with our membership. This information comes from various sources. Overall, I am very happy with these results, and they support our focus on player experience and having more competitive teams.



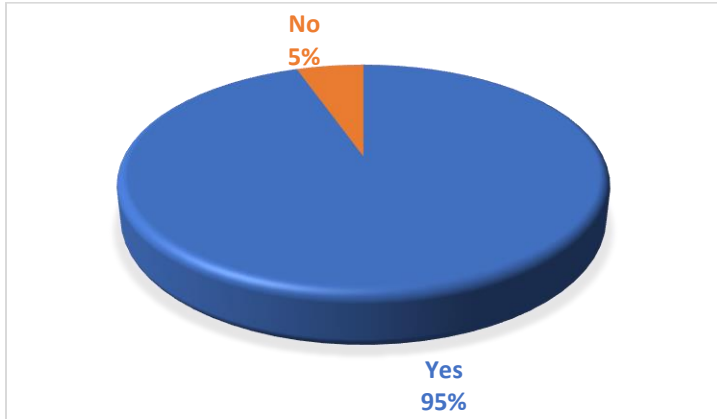
### OVERALL WIN % - COMPETITIVE



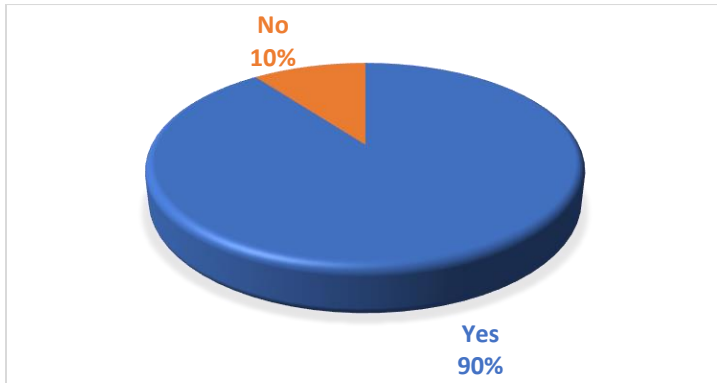
### OVERALL WIN % EXCLUDING U18 - COMPETITIVE



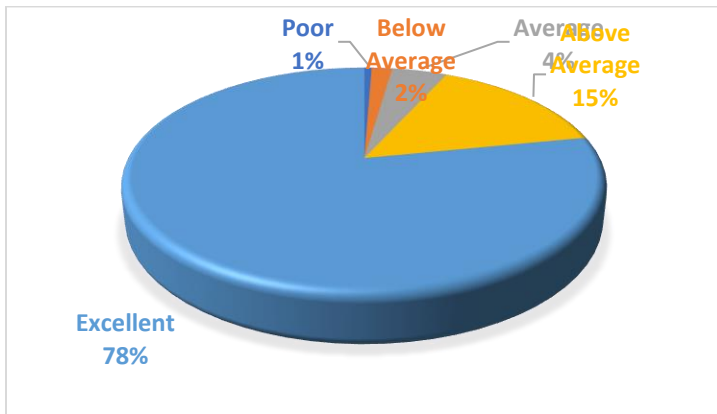
Did your child enjoy playing on this team? (95% yes and 5% no)



Would you want your child to be on a team with this coach again? (90% yes and 10% no)



Overall team rating experience? (Excellent 78%, above average 15%, average 4%, below average 2% and poor 1%)



## Social Media Presence

It was a difficult season with less spectators and fans in the stands for our Bedford Blues teams. However, we would like to take an opportunity to thank all those volunteers who helped to bring the games to the fans by live streaming so many hours of games. Our video streaming team members are the unsung heroes of the 2020-21 season. Without you, our fans would not have been able to stay up to date and engaged with the success of our teams and ultimately our organization. To all the fans who tuned in to watch and virtually cheer on our teams, thank you for your patience while we navigated this difficult season. We look forward to welcoming you all back into the rink this fall and let's blow the roof off the arena!!!

PJ Mäkinen is our Social Media Coordinator and he continues doing an incredible job showcasing our association. BDMHA currently has social media channels on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and all these accounts have very active and engaged followers.

To date our followers on each platform are as follows:

Social Channel	Followers (May 2019)	Followers (Aug 2019)	Followers (June 2020)	Current Followers (June 2021)
Facebook	502	603	1,141	1,430
Twitter	1,125	1,169	1,331	1,404
Instagram	0	265	863	1,065

Follow our social media accounts at the following links:

- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/BDMHA/>
- Twitter - [https://twitter.com/Bedford Blues](https://twitter.com/Bedford_Blues)
- Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/bedfordblues/>

Please send all photos/videos to our social media coordinator at [bdmha.socialmedia@gmail.com](mailto:bdmha.socialmedia@gmail.com)

Three years ago, I presented to Hockey Nova Scotia on "Raising our Expectations. I believe this is key for organizations. I believe very strongly in setting high expectations and building a high-performance environment/culture. I am confident that the new board will continue to build off the foundation we have established. They will continue to be proactive, strategic, and have a focus on player development/player experience.

In closing I want to thank everyone in the association for an incredible three years. I will miss this role very much but will enjoy my new role as past President of BDMHA. Hope to see you all at the rink soon.

GO Blues GO!

**Jason Hale, CPA, CA**



## VP Operations, Eric Villeneuve

The 2020-2021 season was, all things considered, a good one. We were very fortunate to have a season...something many other regions of the country weren't able to enjoy. The beginning of tryouts was pushed back one month due to Covid-19 and we had to adapt to different protocols and regulations and even a shutdown as set out by Public Health. At times there were no spectators able to watch, at other times we were limited to 1 spectator per child, and at other times we were fortunate to have more than that. I think we would all agree that it was so nice to see the kids back on the ice with their friends enjoying the game they love.

The VP Operations is responsible for supporting the overall operation of BDMHA. It was a busy season with plenty of activity for our association that includes 1050 players on 58 teams (U7 - 6, U9 - 10, U11 - 11, U13 - 12, U15 - 8, U18 - 9, U23 - 1, Jump Into Hockey - 1). This year we continued the Para/Sledge Hockey in partnership with Hockey Nova Scotia (HNS) and saw a nice rise in participants in this program. This program is open to children of all abilities from across the HRM and we hope to see the numbers increase in the coming years.

Our teams achieved great success this season. While there were no tournaments, a number of teams took home regular season and playoff championships. This happened in both recreation and competitive leagues.

### **Coaching certification:**

HNS audits the qualifications of volunteer coaches in every minor hockey association to ensure that all coaches meet the requirements. BDMHA's Certification Coordinator is Christien Lefebvre and I would like to thank him for the many hours that he dedicates to ensure that all of our coaches are up to date on their certifications. HNS has firm deadlines for completing the Criminal Record Check, Vulnerable Sector Check, and Respect in Sport Volunteer Program. As well, all coaches must be up to date with coaching clinics and safety training certificates. Christien ensures that our countless volunteers are in compliance with the requirements.

### **Hockey Development Professional (HDP):**

Shawn MacKenzie continues in his role as HDP and does a tremendous job in designing and implementing development programs for players at all ages and levels. The Core Skills Program is the biggest program and runs throughout the season from the first week of the season until the last. Shawn also runs other in-season programs catered to specific positions. Another important area of focus for the HDP is developing and supporting the coaches in BDMHA. With all of the unknowns of this past season Shawn was able to adjust our on ice programming as the Public Health guidance changed very often. With his dedicated development staff Shawn was able to ensure that all of our teams benefitted from their expertise. A big thanks to Shawn for all of his time and energy in helping make our association such a successful one.

### **BDMHA Administrator/Ice Coordinator:**

Matt Oxford fulfills both of these roles for BDMHA and ensures that everything runs smoothly in everything from registration to ice allocations, supporting the Executive and the BDMHA website. Matt also does league scheduling for the MMHL and CMHF, tournament support (Noah Llewelyn and Jordan

Boyd...both of which were cancelled this year) and communicates directly with HNS and the other Minor Hockey Associations.

Thanks so much to Matt for all of his time and expertise which are instrumental in BDMHA being a model association in Nova Scotia and beyond. I would also like to congratulate Matt on being the recipient of Hockey Nova Scotia's Registrar's Award.

**Apparel:**

IIG/Nova Trophy continues to be the official supplier for BDMHA. We continue to bring in new jerseys so that all Bedford teams look unified and professional.

**Referee In Chief:**

Gary Couch completed his second year as referee in chief this season.

Gary rolled out the new 4-man system last year at certain levels and that, too, has been a success. We will continue to support our referees and look for ways to keep recruiting and developing them.

Thanks very much to Gary for all of his efforts in helping to mentor and teach our many new referees who have joined this group for the first time.

**Executive Members:**

I would like to thank all members of the executive who dedicate so much time to our association. Their efforts have been instrumental in the success that we saw this season on many levels. With an association as big as ours, it really does take the collective efforts of the board members and the families of our players to create such a great environment to play hockey.

I would also like to say a special thank you to Jason Foster who took on the lead Covid safety role. With things changing literally from day to day Jason spent many hours ensuring that the safety of our players, coaches, staff and families were always the number one priority. I would also like to thank all of the team safety reps for their dedication. This season would simply not have been possible without your commitment.

Thanks to everyone involved...it is a real pleasure to work with all of you.

Congratulations on a great season and I look forward to our return in the Fall. While it will likely not look exactly like pre-Covid times, I hope that we will get back to something similar. But whatever it does look like I am very confident that our volunteers will make sure that it is a positive experience for everyone.

Have a great summer!

***Eric Villeneuve***

**VP Finance, Jeff Christian**

For the 2020-2021 season we did not engage in a formal budget process given the uncertainty of Covid-19 and implications on the association. Our actual player registration was 1,068 players (2019-2020 registration was 1,112). The 1,068 does not include any registrations with Metro West Female Hockey registrations or Bedford Armada. We are forecasting 1,140 player registrations for the 2021-2022 season.

Although this past season, we did not engage in a formal budget process, the Board determined that it would be prudent to cancel, reduce and/or defer all non-essential expenditures such as the annual jersey refresh and core skills contractor costs to name a few. With most of our current year user pay summer camps and previous year camps shut or parred down, we reigned in our spending to ensure we could meet the changing requirements of the season.

To help subsidize the operational spending, we applied for multiple grants and subsidies through various sources such as Hockey Canada, Hockey Nova Scotia, the Canadian Employment Wage Subsidy and the Nova Scotia Small Business Reopening and Support Grant for a total of approximately \$90,000 and well as a prior year contribution of \$10,000 from Metro West Force for their portion of 50-50 Sales which were not recouped in last year's figures.

Between late November to the end of December and again in February, games were put on hold and teams at all levels could no longer share ice. As a result, we obtained additional ice contracts to ensure most teams would be able to practice which resulted in additional ice rental costs. However, with the reduction in games played and core skills restrictions with third party instructors, there were some savings on those expenses.

As a result of these initiatives and expenditures, it is expected that the final 2020-2021 fiscal year end results will have a profit of approximately \$76,000. However, it should be noted that this would imply we had a net loss from operations of approximately \$24,000 after factoring in the grants and 50-50 prior year receipts from Metro West Force. Profitability was driven completely through the receipt of these grants and subsidies.

As disclosed in last year's report, as part of our duty to the membership of the association, the Board also took advantage of several government incentive programs during the pandemic such as the payroll wage subsidy and the CEBA loan program which allowed us to continue without any negative employee implications. We fully intend to repay the CEBA loan as required by the end of 2022. The CEBA loan liability is currently at \$40,000 and we have earmarked a short term GIC to fund its repayment.

2020-2021 also marked the second year for the 50-50 draws with Metro Force West which were successful. BD&MHA does not receive any amount directly from 50-50 and only serves in an administrative capacity for the benefit of its membership. Due to the popularity of the program, it will likely return in the 2021-2022 season.

Overall, the current financial and cash position of BD&MHA remains in excellent shape, even in light of the events of the last year or so largely due to the grants and COVID relief programs that we received. With visibility improving with vaccine rollout and declining cases, the association has resumed using a detailed budgeting process which monitors our actual results to focus on the ongoing financial stability of the association. It is anticipated that the 2021-2022 season will utilize some of the cash flow surplus to enhance development offerings at the U7, U9 and potentially U15 levels with a series of new programs to better develop our players.

***Jeff Christian***

**VP Competitive, Scott Urquhart**

Another hockey season has passed, and while it was not what we had hoped for, a huge thank you to all

players, parents and volunteers for adapting. We had many starts and stops to our season, which was not easy on the players or families of Bedford Minor. In saying that, our teams displayed resilience and fortitude in bouncing back from each of these shutdowns to continuously get back on the ice, and put together great efforts to finish the season off.

We were able to have a successful shortened season at all levels, and it was on display during the CMHF weekend where we had 14 of 20 competitive teams compete. The U11 AA CMHF championship game was a hard fought battle between both of our U11 teams (Veniot & Gillis) with Eric Gillis U11 team, pulling out a win in overtime. Although not every team was successful, we had 7 teams make the finals of the CMHF weekend where each player battled to the very end to try to bring the CMHF banner home to Bedford. Bedford Minor was extremely proud of all of our teams who fought through a very tough season to get to the point where they were able to compete in this very competitive weekend of hockey.

Bedford Minor would not be the association it is without the dedication of our volunteer coaches, managers and safety people. Our volunteers log countless hours, and sacrifice personal time, which does not go unnoticed.

I would like to congratulate the following coaches on being selected as coach(s) of the year for their respective playing levels:

- U11 – Eric Gillis
- U13 – Jeremy Gillis
- U15 – Scott Steffen
- U18 – Jamie Moore

After each season our Hockey Development Professional, Shawn MacKenzie and myself sit down to evaluate our season, and we were both very happy with the successes we had this year. We have already set plans to build on the previous season, by implementing more development opportunities for our players to build and to surpass the successes of the previous season onto the next. We feel we have a great contingent of coaches who we will lean on to bring these successes into the 2021-22 season of hockey. We will be looking to improve on our feedback process for players, as well as establishing strong coach support.

Our development programs were once again very successful this past season with continuation of our forward, and defense camps for our players. We will be looking at expanding into other skill areas, and levels next season. As we continue to build our development sessions, the outcome will be a stronger player foundation, which will build a better, more skilled association from the U11 level to U18.

We stayed steady at 20 competitive teams and statistically speaking, for a successful year, Bedford would like our divisions to run minimally at 50% and preferably > 60% win / loss ratio. While we can drive the same expectation down to a team level, with 20 teams it is inevitable that some teams will be much stronger and weaker in any division in any given year. If we review the divisional results of the regular season for Central Minor:

- U11 – competitive having earned 72% of possible points (down from 79% last year).
- U13 - competitive having earned 73% (up from 67% last year).
- U15 – competitive having earned 61% (down from 63% last year),
- U18 – competitive at 38% (down from 40% last year)

Overall the Bedford Minor competitive teams earned 66% of the points, a slight drop from 67% last year, of total potential points using the bench mark as Central Minor regular season as well as playoffs, not including semi finals or finals, day of champions, provincials, tournaments or exhibition games. This is based on over 500+ games!!!! That's a lot of hockey and a lot of success.

We all know it is not the scoreboard to ultimately determine success in Minor Hockey, but it is an indicator we can use to determine if we are struggling competitively in any of our divisions, a factor in competitive hockey. As in any year, we do have a few teams requiring attention for various reasons and we did work with these teams to ensure they have the best possible outcome, and resources available to have a successful year.

With an association this size we will have issues and this year was no exception. Continuous discussions were held with our HDP, and a lot of various meetings occurred with the coaching staff and players to assist them in any short falls. Bedford Minor Hockey continues to have a large pool of players that are interested in trying out for competitive teams and each year this continues to grow. We saw once again a record number of players trying out. The challenges faced with the increasing number of players trying out for a competitive level is trying to make room for them all. Having more players play competitive hockey, and also take advantage of the core skills programs allows the association to develop more players which will make the association stronger and more competitive in years to come.

Unfortunately Covid impacted our ability to utilize as many call ups this year as we would usually have. Although we were able to call up some players, the number of players was limited based on covid protocols, and therefore we fell short of where I would like to be for calling up. This is one of my biggest goals every year, to give players the opportunity to play up a level, and help boost their confidence and experience at a level that they may not get to play. Next year, I am hoping that we can get back on track with our call ups.

With the end of the season comes preparation for the next season, which we are in full swing. We are accepting applications for coaches, and making sure we make the right selections to have the best coaches represent the Bedford Minor Hockey values we strive for year after year.

I look forward to serving the association next year as its President. My mandate will be one of player development, and player experience. I will be working alongside a talented group of board members to ensure we offer more development options for our players. I will dedicate my term to making sure our players have the best coaches who put development first and foremost, and to make sure they provide the best growth environment for all of our players. I look forward to getting to work on this in the coming months, and look forward to presenting and leading Bedford Minor in this direction in the 2021-22 season.

Good luck to all in the fall tryout process.

***Scott Urquhart***

## VP Recreation, Stefanie Redden

Our 2020-2021 season faced new challenges and saw our community come together in new and creative ways. Covid changed the way that we operate in more ways than one and I want to call out the adaptability and teamwork that I have witnessed over this past year.

We created 22 recreation teams within Bedford and District Minor Hockey Association this season: 5 Atom; 5 Peewee; 4 Bantam; 7 Midget; and 1 Minor Junior team. I would like to thank our recreational coaches, team managers, and divisional coordinators for their dedication and tireless efforts on behalf of our players. This season our divisional coordinators were shared for recreation and competitive and they were as follows:

- Atom – Jennifer Oake
- Peewee – Vacant
- Bantam – Jennifer MacLeod
- Midget – Glenn Breen

A special thanks goes to each of our coordinators who have been watching over our teams in their respective divisions and taking great care to make sure that things were running smoothly over the past few months. Our player's experience is significantly more successful due to all of your efforts and commitment to both your teams and the association.

In addition to the coordinator roles we implemented a new role to focus on Covid regulations and updates, Association Safety Coordinator. The restrictions related to Covid changed many times this season and there was a significant amount of work needed to coordinate and communicate these changes. Additionally supporting our many team safety coordinators was a huge undertaking and I would like to personally thank Jason Foster and recognize his success in this role.

A key part of our success as an organization comes from the commitment and hard work from our Coordinator Matt Oxford. I would like to extend a special thank you to Matt for all of his support throughout the season, from scheduling to supporting our families and our executive team, we couldn't do it without you. This year was an especially difficult one in terms of scheduling due to the intermittent shutdowns. I want to acknowledge the extra effort that was put in here by Matt, Well done!

Similar to recent seasons, we completed a formalized process for balancing the Bedford teams in each division. We held evaluations that consisted of a skills session and an intra-squad game. Multiple evaluators rated the players on their skating, puck handling and overall hockey ability. The results of the balancing process were compiled and each player was ranked. The players were then separated into groups based on their relative rankings at a player draft for each division. Once the draft process was completed, teams were reviewed by myself and our Hockey Development Professional, Shawn Mackenzie and some small adjustments were made in order to ensure balanced teams in each division.

Our recreational teams have done very well this season in the Metro Minor Hockey League, we had a few teams take home either gold or silver medals, congratulations to the U15 Oilers (Gold), U23 (Gold), U18 Leafs (Silver), and the U11 Spitfires (Silver) on your divisional championships! Congrats to all of the other teams who also competed (U13 Capitals and U18 Coyotes).

Core Skills Sessions continued this season for U11 and U13 recreational teams, balanced with coach lead team practices. This approach has been very well received based on feedback received to date.

We unfortunately, due to Covid were unable to host the annual Noah Llewellyn Memorial Tournament. In the past this tournament has been our largest hosted by BDMHA. Memorializing Noah Llewellyn in this tournament is incredibly important to us in Bedford and we eagerly look forward to hosting again in the 2021-2022 season.

Minor hockey could not exist without the full participation of hundreds of coaches, managers, safety coordinators, volunteers and parents who put in long hours of commitment to see their kids compete and have fun. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all of you who have volunteered their time to make this happen within BDMHA so far through 2020-2021. I would also like to extend my appreciation to my fellow Executive members for their support and encouragement. They put in significant time on our behalf and make hockey work for all of us. We are looking forward to a successful completion of the 2021-2022 season.

***Stefanie Redden***

## VP U9/U7, Denise Crowell

The 2020-2021 U7 and U9 programs had another very successful season this year, despite navigating the challenges that Covid-19 brought us. We had close to 400 players registered at Bedford & District Minor Hockey Association (BDMHA) between both of these levels. Below is a brief summary and overview of our programs this year.

### **U9 Program Report – Year End 2020-2021**

The 2020-2021 season was certainly memorable for the U9 Division of the Bedford and District Minor Hockey Association. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, safety protocols and restrictions were implemented to protect player safety. Coaches, parents, players and volunteers demonstrated exceptional flexibility and thanks to their support and cooperation we were able to enjoy another great season.

In 2020-2021, there were 174 players registered for U9 hockey, which is comparable to the previous year. The 174 players were distributed amongst 10 teams – three (3) Advancing teams, three (3) Intermediate teams and four (4) developmental teams. As in previous years, the number and distribution of teams is based upon number of registered players and the results of the player evaluation process.

The U9 program aims to develop player skills in an enjoyable environment. During the first part of the season (up to November 30<sup>th</sup>) teams focused on player development during weekly practices. Teams were provided with 3 practices per week in a shared ice format to focus on skating and puck drills.

Unfortunately, due to a rise in COVID-19 case numbers Hockey Nova Scotia suspended all hockey activities effective November 25<sup>th</sup>. This shut down lasted until December 21<sup>st</sup> when players were able to return to the ice, but in individual practice time slots with no shared ice or games. The Association secured additional time slots for practices and adjusted schedules to provide as much ice time as possible given our limited ice availability.

Effective January 25<sup>th</sup>, public health restrictions were further relaxed to permit games and many U9 teams had their first half ice game that week. Hockey Nova Scotia extended the hockey season and our U9 teams were able to continue playing hockey until mid-April 2021. Unfortunately, teams were not able to participate in tournaments and missed year end celebrations. Despite this, it was a very positive season and players were able to grow and develop their skills.

The season would not have been possible without the cooperation and volunteer work of the coaches, managers, safety representatives and parents. Your ability to remain up to date on COVID-19 protocols and ensure adherence was key to our success. We were able to enjoy a relatively full season even in the middle of a pandemic. Our head coaches, team managers and safety representatives (listed below) all

deserve a special recognition for making our season great. Thank you for your tireless work - it would not have been possible without you!

**Head Coaches:** Greg Crowell, Jason Troini, Warren Hefford, Mark Clare, Ryan Black, Rob Dickson, Chris Kelly, Alain Lefebvre, Craig Frizzell, Terry Bramwell, Andrew Leonard, Greg MacDonald, Phil Reid

**Team Managers:** Tanya Wilson, Krista Sheehan, John Berger, Natasha Byrne, Anne Marie Dubois, Missa Levette, Stephen Campbell, Christine Bowman, Christina Cormier, Brian Walsh

**Safety Representatives:** Tim Purdy, Ryan Lapointe, Steve MacMullin, Ellen Abad, Anne Marie Dubois, Colin Carnell, Nicole Eddy, Phil Jewell, Melissa Couch, John Calder

### **U7 Program Report – Year End 2020-2021**

Our U7 program has wrapped up another successful season at BDMHA. Our U7-1 program is geared towards four-year-olds (born in 2016). This year due to COVID-19, BDMHA had to pause our partnership with the Bedford Skating Club but hope to continue this relationship in the future, or something similar.

With over 57 players registered in U7-2, BDMHA had 2 teams for five-year-old players (born in 2015), and with approximately 87 players registered in U7-3, we had 3 teams for six-year-old players (born in 2014). All U7-2 and U7-3 teams had two hockey practices each week. The focus of these practices was on skill development in skating, puck handling and shooting. During the year with restrictions in place at certain times, groups were split up and extra ice-time had to be secured. With make up sessions available at the end of the year, all players were given equal ice time opportunities at each level.

Due to COVID-19, we unfortunately could not participate in any jamborees or Moosehead intermission games throughout the year. We hope these programs are able to return in the future.

This year, practice times were on Saturday and Sundays for all our U7 groups, both at the BMO Centre, as well as the RBC Centre. Practices were divided between BMO and RBC for our U7-2 and U7-3 groups, while our U7-1 group stayed consistent at the BMO Centre.

Power skating was made available to all groups this year coached by Marie Bowness at our U7-3 level, and Fiona Bell at our U7-1 and U7-2 levels. These sessions were run by our power skating leads with the help of our BDMHA hockey coaches.

BDMHA provided the three U7-3 teams each with 2 sets of goaltender gear to use for the season. Players rotated the equipment each practice so players had a chance to try it out prior to making an investment in equipment of their own. BDMHA would like to continue to support the development of goaltenders starting at an early age.

With 6 teams, and all our COVID restrictions, we were lucky to have Coaches and Managers this year (listed below) who were able to adapt to any changes, which was a big task with our youngest players. We would like to recognize and thank our Head Coaches for taking the lead on their teams and the incredible amounts of work they did for our youngest players. Furthermore, thank you to all of the team Managers, Safety Reps and Assistant Coaches for their commitment to the program.

**Head Coaches:** Sean Pindar, Greg Stoner, Ben Dupuis, Chris Kelly, Dave Peters, Denis Aucoin, Greg Crowell, Chris Burry



**Managers and Safety Reps:** Katie Roebathan, Adrienne Carr, Andrea Stewart, Amanda Frost, Megan Douglas, Stephanie Swain, Kyla Burry

Thank you to all of the parents, coaches, managers and all of the volunteers who make Bedford and District Minor Hockey Association the successful association it is. I thoroughly enjoyed the year and look forward to continuing to build Bedford's U7 and U9 programs into the best in Canada.

And lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Nancy Oldford (U9 Coordinator) and Kyla Burry (U7 Coordinator) for their continued dedication and commitment to their programs this year. Their organization, initiative, and hard work were very much appreciated!!

***Denise Crowell***

## Hockey Development Professional, Shawn MacKenzie

The challenge to make hockey happen during dangerous and uncertain times may have been the biggest obstacle the association has ever faced. Much went into developing the "system " that would allow our near 1200 players to continue to safely play our game. It was an exhausting undertaking, one that saw the association have to adapt to changing situations.

Despite some setbacks, we were able to keep our game going and ended up with a successful season. Matt Oxford deserves much credit for his work adjusting schedules and formats. The end result was a longer playoff season than usual, with most of our teams in an April championship hunt. We were also pleased to be able to offer most of our winter development programs. These programs faced schedule juggling and periods of shutdowns, but thanks to Matt most ran to completion.

The season objective was to keep the kids safe and to give them the best hockey experience possible.

It was through the collective effort of the mission where the association showed its best. Those at the front.... our safety people, managers and coaches deserve much recognition for the implementation of the strategies, but it really goes far beyond the leaders. Each individual family and players had their own sacrifices to make. I often watched the kids trudging to the rink to get screened fully equipped, masks on and following protocol. I witnessed the independence of players of all ages quietly doing their part to keep the game they love alive. I am sure it is not easy and would require much patience to put goalie gear on in the back of the car but it got done. I personally found the effort of the past season inspirational. I also believe the fragility of the situation brought our focus to what matters most in minor hockey and the importance of rinks in our lives.

There were some losses, things like dressing room camaraderie took a hit and I am sure road trips to tournaments and the hotels were also missed. However, we can take solace that our kids continued to play hockey this past winter. For this we are fortunate as we hope for better days ahead.

Through the game, we try and teach the players that when faced with adversity and challenge it is important that you do not become individualistic and separate from the group. Try not to become negative and take on a defeatist attitude. We convey the approach of stepping up the unified effort, staying positive and trying to "out-team" the challenge. A heartfelt thank you to our leaders, parents and players for the action of that message.

See you at the rinks,

***Shawn***