

breakout

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE GREATER TORONTO HOCKEY LEAGUE & MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

WINTER 2024



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FIRST WORDS

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President & CEO
of Hockey Canada

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IN THE



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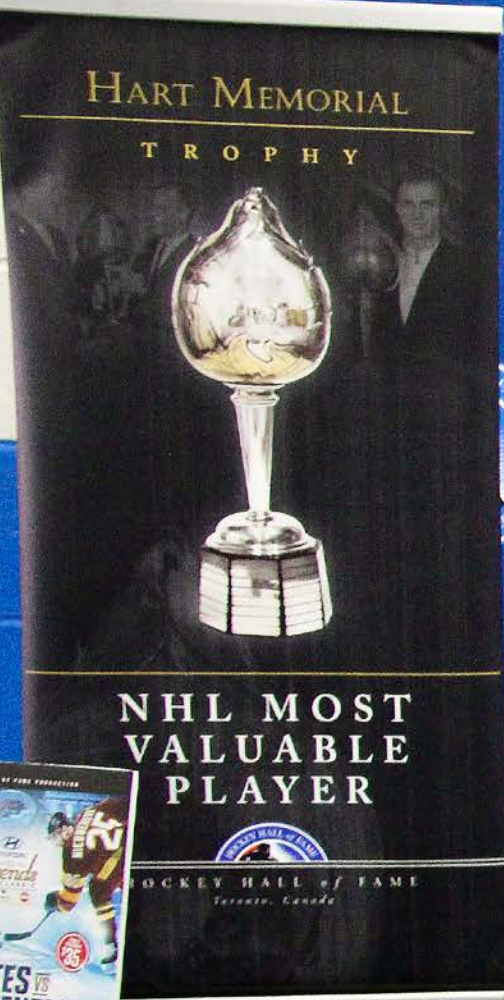
SNAPSHOTS



GTHL MEDIA DAY WEST MALL LIGHTNING

The GTHL held its second annual **Media Day** in September, welcoming participants of all ages across many different clubs and house leagues.

Photo by
STEPHANIE CORATTI





SNAPSHOTS



PUCK DROP WEEKEND RETURNS

On October 21-22, the GTHL's **Puck Drop Weekend** returned to **Canlan Sports York** to celebrate the beginning of the 2023-24 season. The weekend featured a total of 72 games of various age groups and divisions.

Photo by
STEPHANIE CORATTI





SNAPSHOTS



GTHL X WHITEFISH RIVER FIRST NATION EXCHANGE

On October 27-29, the **U13 'A' George Bell Titans** welcomed participants from **Whitefish River First Nation** to Toronto as part of the second annual Whitefish River First Nation and GTHL exchange. The visit included a visit to MLSE LaunchPad.

Photo by
STEPHANIE CORATTI



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SNAPSHOTS



INAUGURAL MOUSTACHE CUP TOURNAMENT

On November 17-19, the GTHL, in partnership with **Movember**, hosted the inaugural **Movember Moustache Cup 'A'** tournament at Scotiabank Pond. The U15 captured their division's championship title.

Photo by
STEPHANIE CORATTI

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FIRST WORDS

KATHERINE HENDERSON
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
OF HOCKEY CANADA



A great sport done in a great country

In September, I was proud to become Hockey Canada's president and chief executive officer, a role that means so much to me as a proud Canadian, leader in sport and lifelong fan of hockey.

Throughout my first three months with Hockey Canada, I have found myself repeatedly answering a question that many of you may have as well: why did you want to join Hockey Canada in this position?

The why is easy.

Hockey is a fantastic sport. It is exhilarating, strategic and its speed, skill and grace help make it a brilliant sport for players, coaches, officials, administrators, volunteers, parents and fans.

For my family, hockey has brought us so many wonderful memories and experiences, including cheering on my son in the GTHL as he grew up playing for the Scarborough Ice Raiders.

The sport keeps us on the edge of our seat and it is so easy to fall in love with hockey.

Hockey is powerful in that it brings communities and our country together for great moments that we share together in local rinks and at the heights of global excellence.

A great sport done in a great country is a wonderful why for me.

When you look at hockey, and its size, scale and importance to Canadians, it must be a power to create positive change in all of our lives and it will be difficult for sport in Canada to evolve without the leadership of hockey.

Done well, hockey and sport can contribute to health, happiness, learning, travel, friendships, pride and a sense of being part of something bigger than yourself.

However, it's important to not forget that there

are Canadians in our communities, provinces and country who have had experiences in hockey that have not met their expectations, and we need to take that seriously as we plan for the future.

The only way that we can deliver what is best for the game of hockey is to deliver what is unequivocally the best for those that hockey needs to be serving.

Playing and watching hockey is undeniably a part of who we are as Canadians and I truly believe that

we can make hockey and sport in Canada mean so much more to fans and participants from coast to coast to coast.

We can be that aspirational sport for all, and I see a hockey that not includes others, but values them.

There has been a lot of discussion about hockey in Canada publicly in the last year, but that means it is important to Canadians, and they're listening to us and want to see where we are all going. Quite honestly, so they should because we're going to be asking them respectfully to come along with us.

What we are doing matters and

hockey matters to people across our country.

If you're reading this, you've probably experienced hockey done well and it has likely shaped your thinking about sport, belonging and community.

We know that there are issues in the game that are detracting from participants and fans having positive hockey experiences, but we are on a journey together to make hockey mean more to more Canadians and we are glad to have you on that journey with us.

Together, we can ensure that for generations to come, hockey in Canada embodies safety, excellence and sport for all.

I am so happy and grateful to be on the journey with you.

Carpe Futurum.

THE ONLY WAY THAT WE CAN DELIVER WHAT IS BEST FOR THE GAME OF HOCKEY IS TO DELIVER WHAT IS UNEQUIVOCALLY THE BEST FOR THOSE THAT HOCKEY NEEDS TO BE SERVING.





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ACRYLIC AWARDS

AROUND THE



BECAUSE NOT ALL THE ACTION IS ON THE ICE

INAUGURAL MOVEMBER MOUSTACHE CUP TOURNAMENT RAISES OVER \$40,000 WITH U14 'A' LORNE PARK CLARKSON WILD SWEEPING CHAMPIONSHIPS

On November 17-19, the Greater Toronto Hockey League, in partnership with Movember, hosted the inaugural Movember Moustache Cup 'A' tournament at Scotiabank Pond. As the tournament hosted 32 teams across four non-contact 'A' divisions of Under-14, U15, U16, and U18, the **U14 Lorne Park Clarkson Wild** swept the championships on and off the ice.

Ahead of the tournament, teams were encouraged to participate in the Movember Moustache Cup Fundraising Challenge. A total of 16 teams registered for the challenge, collectively raising **\$42,701** in support of Movember. The **U14 Wild** finished atop of the leaderboard with \$14,670.92 raised. As winners of the Fundraising Challenge, the Wild were given pre-treatment with the GTHL's dressing room to use as their own for the duration of the tournament, along with Movember packages for each player.

In second, the **U18 Leaside Flames** raised \$12,134.06 and were surprised with recognition and Movember packages for each player for their efforts. Rounding out the top five were the **U15 Don Mills Mustangs** in third with \$3,730.00 raised, the **U16 Meadowvale Hawks** in fourth with \$1,480.00, and the **U14 West Hill Golden Hawks** with a total of \$1,385.00. To view the GTHL Movember Moustache Cup Fundraising Challenge, click here.

As part of the Fundraising Challenge, Movember invited former Toronto Maple Leaf fan favourite Darcy Tucker as the tournament's special guest. Teams and individuals who had registered for the challenge and had a minimum of at least one donation were able to participate in the meet and greet.



MOVEMBER MOUSTACHE CUP TOURNAMENT

U14 'A' DIVISION

FINALIST York Mills	CHAMPION Lorne Park Clarkson Wild
-------------------------------	---

U15 'A' DIVISION

FINALIST Ted Reeve Thunder	CHAMPION Avenue Road Ducks
--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

U16 'A' DIVISION

FINALIST West Mall Lightning	CHAMPION Applewood Coyotes
--	--------------------------------------

U18 'A' DIVISION


FINALIST Leaside Flames	CHAMPION Waterloo Wolves
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U14 LORNE PARK CLARKSON WILD CHAMPIONS



U15 AVENUE ROAD DUCKS CHAMPIONS




 **GTHL Hockey**
@GTHLHockey

A big thanks goes out to Darcy Tucker for being this year's #GTHLMoustacheCup special guest!

Fundraisers had the chance to meet with the former Toronto Maple Leaf at @ScotiabankPond this afternoon.

@MovemberCA | @16DarcyTucker



12:11 PM · Nov 18, 2023 · 3,622 Views

U16 APPLEWOOD COYOTES CHAMPIONS



U18 WATERLOO WOLVES CHAMPIONS



COMPLETE PHOTO GALLERY

To view the complete November Moustache Cup G Gallery, [click here](#).



A LETTER TO HOCKEY PARENTS

FROM AN EXPERIENCED HOCKEY MOM

It's that time of the year: **HOCKEY SEASON!**

Anyone who has ever played hockey or has a child who plays, knows the hockey community is a big family that you are a part of forever. It's players on the ice, skating their hearts out; parents with their warm drinks, cheering from behind the glass. It all sounds so fantastic, living in the moment through an exciting 45 minutes – what could go wrong?

A few minutes into the game, your child makes a bad play, or your goalie lets in a soft goal. From behind the glass and in the stands, you're frustrated, angry, and embarrassed. You're thinking: my kid knows better than that, they must know better than that...

You want to communicate that, to push them to be better... If you think after your child makes a mistake on the ice, that your response should be to yell, bang the glass, or give them a dirty look, **you're wrong** - no exception.

The behaviour and example set by parents is one of the – if not **the biggest** – major influences on your child's growth and development. Yelling and banging the glass will only land you a failure in how to be a good and supportive hockey parent.

It may be hard to believe, and likely easy to forget, but your child feels the same frustration that makes you want to yell. Your hockey player knows everyone is looking at them, they know their mistake caused a goal or that they made a bad pass. They know more than anyone that they have let their team down.

Your player has so much pressure on them out there, playing the fastest game in the world, and what they need in those moments are hockey parents who support them. Hockey parents that focus on the positives. Hockey parents who treat all the players and the game with respect.

Don't get caught up in the mistakes – your hockey player does enough of that for everyone. Instead, get caught up in cheering your player on! Don't roll your eyes in the stands, yell, or embarrass your child. Remind yourself of the fact that these are kids, and the game – everything about it – is supposed to be played for fun. Your hockey player is not getting paid

to play; this game is not their job. Your hockey player is playing because they love the sport.

Don't take their love away because you, as parents, have become more competitive than the players themselves. Enjoy every game,



enjoy every period, and enjoy every shift. Make friends, cheer for all the children and kids on the ice. Watch your child grow, develop, and learn – and eat tons of arena fries!

From an experienced hockey mom, time flies by and before you know it, watching your hockey player ends. Don't waste these special years on bringing your child down. Spend these years choosing to lift your child up – always. 🍁

DON'T ROLL YOUR EYES IN THE STANDS, YELL, OR EMBARRASS YOUR CHILD. REMIND YOURSELF OF THE FACT THAT THESE ARE KIDS.



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Invest In Your Home With These Simple Renovations



Renovating the kitchen or adding another bathroom can raise a home's value significantly. But, what about other spaces inside and outside of the home? Here are two areas that are often neglected, where both the return and the experience is worth the effort.

The Garage

You don't have to go as lavish as hoops icon Shaquille O'Neal did with his Atlanta garage renovation (below). But you can add up to 10% to your home's value (source: Vesta) with a garage upgrade, such as installing a modular garage organization system with flooring.

While your current garage space may be used to simply store hockey equipment, tools or household supplies, installing a garage organization system opens up many other possibilities. It transforms a nonprioritized space into one of the highlights of your home: an exercise room, workshop, studio, man cave or second office – a flex space to make your own.

The average two-car garage can account for as much as one-sixth of the home's square footage; re-thinking and maximizing this space can contribute to the overall worth of any house.



**The quality is top choice.
I have another garage
I'm building, but I don't
need any gifts, because
I'm going to buy!**

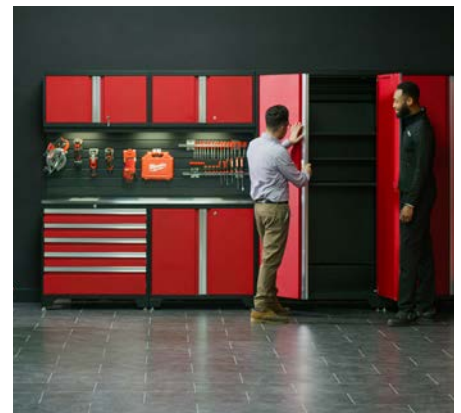
Shaquille O'Neal, on his NewAge garage setup.

The Outdoor Kitchen

According to a recent Royal LePage survey of 340 real estate professionals, renovating an outdoor entertainment space can also raise property value by as much as 10%.

An outdoor living space can also be an unexpected driver in property value – not to mention a wonderful space to create memories with family and friends.

Previously, if you wanted a dream outdoor space, you'd have to spend upwards of \$30,000 or more. Today, premium modular solutions offer homeowners the chance to customize their ideal outdoor kitchen – without the astronomical price. You can select your preferred cabinet size and material, along with the cooking appliances that are built to fit. No architect or designer needed.



Where to Begin?

Homeowners in the GTA can visit the NewAge Products Experience Centre, a 11,000 square foot home renovation haven of premium products and knowledgeable, personable product experts.

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QGA

WITH FAZE CLAN'S

CBASS

► BY BRENDAN MORI

THE GTHL SAT DOWN WITH
CBASS, ONE OF THE FOUNDING
MEMBERS OF *FAZE CLAN*

FaZe Clan started in 2010 and has since established itself as one of the world's most prominent and influential gaming organizations.

Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself?

CB: I'm 29 years old - born, raised, and living in Toronto. I helped start FaZe Clan when I was 16 and I'm still here helping grow the organization as best as I can. Today, I'm Head of Social Media for FaZe where I've expanded the company with the Toronto office and oversee the social media team here.

Q: Growing up in Toronto, did you play hockey?

CB: Unfortunately, I never got to play hockey growing up because it was too expensive, but I got on a public rink every chance I could.

Q: What was your favourite sport video game to play growing up?

CB: I played every sports game possible growing up... NHL (and NHL Hitz), Madden, MLB The Show, NBA Live, NBA Street... It took up most of my time.

Q: For those unfamiliar with the esports scene, talk to us about what FaZe Clan is.

CB: FaZe is one of the most prominent and followed gaming organizations in the world, founded in 2010 by a group of internet kids and today reaches over 500 million followers across social media globally. The roster consists of world-class gamers, streamers, content creators, and esports professionals. Our gaming division houses [over 10] competitive esports teams with titles including Call of Duty, Counter-Strike, Halo, FIFA, and more. With a combined total of over 40 world championships to date, FaZe has brought home dozens of trophies with historic wins like the 2022 CS:GO PGL Antwerp Major, 2021 Call of Duty League Championship, and 2023 CS:GO Intel Grand Slam and most recently, the Halo World Championship 2023.

Q: How did you get into the esports scene and more specifically, in with FaZe?

CB: I was friends with the original founders of FaZe Clan, before there were

1000 subscribers on the channel. We met online and played together every day. When the FaZe content started to get more of an audience, I started lending more of a hand to help manage it. It was a natural transition, and I was lucky – nothing like the rigorous recruitment process we go through today.

Q: What does a typical day at the office look like for you?

CB: There aren't many typical days at FaZe, but for the most part, it's spending whatever time I have to keep up to date with the latest content, trends, and conversations in our communities and industry so that I can be as informed as possible when having internal conversations at the company about what our next steps should be.

Q: You have created content and collaborated with the Toronto Maple Leafs, New York Islanders, NHL, and even former GTHL alumnus Mitch Marner – is there one piece of content or a collaboration you've done that you are most proud of?

CB: Without question, our cover issue edition of Sports Illustrated. I read that magazine every week growing up (and still do).

Q: NHL 24 came out in October – have you checked it out? Is there a specific feature or change in the game you were most excited about?

CB: I almost always give the new NHL a try. Some years I play it more than others, depending on how many of my friends got it that year. This new one is interesting, they did a ton of different stuff with the controls. I'm not sure how I feel about it yet. I'm glad they're finally giving the player-specific passing a try, but it could probably still be implemented better.

Q: In moderation and when paired with physical activity as well, video games can be a great source of entertainment and an added way for youth to socialize with their friends - something we saw**throughout the pandemic. Do you think video games are also a way for kids to learn new skills and grow as individuals?**

CB: I think anything that challenges you in life is something that gives you an opportunity to grow from it. Video games, at least if you're trying to be good at them, can be a lot like the lessons team sports have to offer as it relates to the importance of communication skills. When you do something wrong, in a video game you are going to be reminded of it more often, and much quicker. You can learn and get better pretty fast if you're paying attention.

Q: The esports scene has exploded in recent years... What would you say to someone who is skeptical about the future of esports?

CB: It's pretty hard to be skeptical about esports once you've been to a tournament. The passion, the determination, the shared sense of community... it's all the same brand of feeling as sports fans share. Of course, it can be hard to see that until you've felt it first-hand.

Q: Whether at the competitive level, in content creation, or on the business side, what would you say to a young athlete or gamer who wants to break into the esports scene?

CB: Just like anything else in life, if you want to be taken seriously in esports, you need to take esports seriously. You are going to need teammates that can count on you, and you are going to need teammates you can count on. You won't find either if you don't put your best foot forward first.

Q: What's on the docket for the rest of 2023 and into 2024 and beyond for you?

CB: For the time being, I'm in my 13th year at FaZe and still doing everything I can to help make sure that continues. In 2024, I'll turn 30... I don't want to think about that yet!

THE PROS OF ESPORTS

NHL 24 and playing hockey

► BY BRENDAN MORI

The latest edition of the NHL video game franchise released on October 6 on PlayStation and Xbox consoles. While many play the NHL video games for fun, competition, and or the social aspect, did you know that NHL 24 can help you improve your game on the ice too?

LEARNING THE RULES OF HOCKEY

For new hockey fans and players, NHL 24 is a great way to begin learning the many rules and regulations of hockey – from offsides and icings, to all the different penalties possible in a game. Playing the NHL video game is a great way for kids to remember the rules of hockey for when they are on the ice in a game.

DEVELOPING YOUR CREATIVITY WITH THE PUCK

In NHL 24, some of the more notable dekes and signature moves are in the game. Moves like the Michigan, Connor Bedard's patented toe-drag release, and the Forsberg one-hand tuck are all available to be used in-game.

NHL 24 is a great place to practice dekes and figure out things like the timing of when to perform these dekes and what situations and scenarios warrant a deke versus making the safe play.



HOCKEY STRATEGIES

NHL 24 has a wide array of strategies that NHL teams use for all sorts of situations – from offensive zone forecheck to breakout strategies, to even formations for the powerplay and penalty kill! When playing NHL 24, setting or changing your team's strategies can help you pull out a victory online, but did you know that many of these strategies can and are used in a game in real life? Watching your video game players perform a 1-2-2 forecheck can aid players in implementing this forecheck when they are on the ice, too.

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK!

The EA Sports Hockey League (EASHL) allows players to create a club with their friends and compete online against other clubs from around the world.

Online gaming with friends is a great way for young athletes to improve their communication and teamwork skills with their peers. While each player controls their own individual character, a team's ability to move the puck efficiently and effectively is key to creating scoring chances and winning games.



**NHL 24 ACTION!
CAN YOU MAKE A SAVE LIKE THIS IN REAL LIFE?**

FUELLING THE GTHL

REHYDRATE REPLENISH REFUEL



BEYOND THE WHISTLE:

SONDERMEYERS IN STRIPES

Three Sondermeyers wear the stripes, each with their own unique reasons to begin, but inspired by one another to start.

► BY MAX LEWIS

As a player, Owen Sondermeyer knew what it was like to share the ice with his dad, Robert. Playing for the North York Knights 'A' team, Robert had been there at practices and games as Owen's coach and manager over the years. But during an Under-14 select game, where both Owen and Robert were officiating together, the teacher became the student.

"I was getting ready to drop the puck at the arena on the ice. We were about to start the game, so I went to centre ice," Owen recalled of the game with his dad. "And he (Robert) was just standing at the bottom of the circle

in one of the end zones. I'm like, 'What are you doing?' Because he was standing in probably the worst spot he could be."

For Robert, it was a funny – and unique – father-son moment.

"So he's just standing there looking at me, waiting until I figure it out," Robert shared. "The timekeeper knew us as well at the time, too. She was laughing as [Owen] was telling me where I was supposed to stand on the face-off because I forgot."

The amusing situation underscored the surprising reality that it was Owen who had gotten his dad into officiating – not the other way around. Owen, alongside his older brother Quinn, got their officiating careers

informally started refereeing the mini-games at the end of the Learn to Play program that Robert managed for the Knights organization.

Quinn would be the first Sondermeyer inspired to officially wear the black and white stripes.

"It got me to skate. I got to watch a game and also make sure that it's played fairly," said Quinn. "Owen followed suit sometime after, wanting not just a job, but a job that would be fun, keep him active, and give back to the community that has given him so much."

"I thought it would be something good to do with my time and it would be fun to help out the communities I played for like the Knights, helping out at Willowdale, North Toronto and Leaside," Owen added. "It's just great to give back to them because they helped me a lot."

As Owen's motivation to officiate was clear, it transitioned to the next line of thought: if he was going to attend the clinics and check the necessary administrative boxes to become an official, why not bring dad along to join him?

For Robert, having only one of four kids at home with him made it an easy decision.

"I've been coaching the teams for a long time," Robert explained. "When I was coaching the teams I would have to referee scrimmages, so I could already do the basics. I enjoy doing it and I figured it'd be a good way to get some more exercise."

Now three Sondermeyers wear the stripes, each with their own unique reasons to begin, but inspired by one another to start.



Together this past summer, all three participated in the GTHL's 2023 Referee Summer Camp, marking the assumed to be first time a father-and-sons trio have attended the camp.

Robert was cognizant that sometimes kids don't always want to be around their parents and was sure to give them their space in both



L TO R: QUINN, ROBERT (FATHER) AND OWEN SONDERMEYER

GETTING TO GO ON THE ICE AND LEARN TOGETHER WAS A VERY NICE EXPERIENCE.

the classroom and on-ice portions of the camp. For Owen, however, it was an opportunity for a different on-ice dynamic between father and son.

"It was definitely different because instead of having him coaching us, it was more of us working together to try and be more consistent, learn all the rules and improve on

our skating ability," Owen shared.

Being at three different stages of their respective officiating careers, each Sondermeyer highlighted certain aspects of the camp that helped their position. Robert mentioned the guest speakers were all experienced officials themselves who were able to answer the questions he and other

members of the camp had. Owen really enjoyed the opportunity to officiate a U13 'A' game alongside older, more experienced officials who were able to give on-the-fly feedback as needed. Quinn, the veteran of the three, saw the camp as an opportunity to sharpen his skills after being away at school while catching up with familiar faces.

"Getting to go on the ice and learn together was a very nice experience," Quinn said. "Me personally, I'm very introverted so having that family member if you have any questions, just initially ask them and if they don't have the answer, then you go to staff."

Gordie Howe famously played with two of his sons on the Hartford Whalers of the World Hockey Association (WHA) – is there a chance the GTHL sees all three Sondermeyers officiating a game together in the near future?



Not quite yet, as Quinn is a Level Two official, and Owen is currently a Level One. However, they have recently officiated U8 Competitive Development Stream (CDS) modified ice games together. Quinn and Owen managing the games while Robert jumped back and forth to report penalties and help the goalies with equipment issues.

"It's something that I would like to continue doing. At the end of my work day or on weekends, because I love the sport very much," Quinn shared. "Seeing the team's excitement for when they win, brings me back to when I was playing hockey, so it's something that I could see doing for as long as I can skate." ❄️

HOCKEY'S VOLUNTEER: A FAMILY AFFAIR

► BY MAX LEWIS



Multiple generations of two different hockey families. Back left to right: Ed Svelnis (Treasurer at the time, now deceased), Chris Mancini (Second Vice President), George Gloyns (Permit Coordinator). Front left to right: Jeannette Kozovski (First Vice President), Tracey Mackay (U13 Convenor), Kerrie Mancini (Registrar). Jeannette is the daughter of Ed, Tracey is the daughter-in-law of Ed, Kerrie is George's daughter, and Chris is George's son-in-law.

When Connie Mitchell moved to the East York neighbourhood, her husband's first order of business was getting their son enrolled with the East York Hockey Association. After all, his father had coached and volunteered with the organization, and he, alongside his brother, played there as well. Connie had married into a hockey family and felt, now, it was her turn to give back.

"We spent his first season there as parents in the stands, and then immediately decided that we wanted to volunteer for the next year because we're like, 'Okay, we're here all the time, we're going to just sit in the stands and do nothing, we're going to start volunteering.'"

Eventually, Connie graduated to become a member of the executive committee, first as convenor, then as special events coordinator, and finally as president, a position she has held since 2013. Her volunteering journey is not a unique one, but rather a template followed by many families, spanning multiple generations across organizations in the GTHL.

That same family connection can also be found within the Toronto East Enders Hockey Association where current President Mike Fitzpatrick has been volunteering for

over 40 years. His father John first coached at East York while Mike played, before moving on to be the founder of the Toronto East Enders in 1972 alongside Rod Young, providing an outpost for east-end kids looking to play 'A' and 'AA' hockey.

"I could never play for the East Enders because I was too old, so I was on the bench right away," Mike remembered. "I hung up the sweaters, did the water bottles, and collected the pucks at the practices – that was my earliest time volunteering. As I got older, of course, I took on my own team."

When his father John passed away in 2012, Mike transitioned into his father's role, working alongside Bruce Secord, another pillar in the East Enders hockey community. They, along with Connie, realized a need to reorganize and restructure east-end hockey. The East York Hockey Association was, and still is, a House League and Select organization, while the Toronto East Enders operate teams at the competitive ('A' and 'AA' levels). An affiliation between the two groups was the logical solution to give players and families a straightforward path from recreational to competitive hockey, if desired.

"People are already thinking when they're six or seven, where am I going to play [next]?"

So it just made that transition so much easier," Mike explained of the development path created. "We've kept [our] whole community together. We have the East York community and the East Enders community, and we've grown that team together."

The result has been self-fulfilling – players not only starting, but finishing their minor hockey in the East End community. Fast forward to these players now adults with kids of their own starting hockey journeys, they are not only enrolling their kids in the very same organization they played for, but volunteering their time to that community as well.

For organizations like the East York Hockey Association and the Toronto East Enders Hockey Association that are entirely volunteer-run, this generational volunteerism is vital to operation. For Connie and Mike, it's what makes their tireless efforts so rewarding.

"It's not just about throwing kids on a team and sending them on the ice to play hockey," Connie shared. "It's about helping them grow and mature and become good and valued members of society, and instilling these values like giving back and volunteering."

"They had a good experience as a kid, so now they're going to go back and volunteer and help other kids have that same good experience." 🍁

**"WE HAVE THE
EAST YORK
COMMUNITY AND
THE EAST ENDERS
COMMUNITY,
AND WE'VE
GROWN THAT
TEAM TOGETHER."**

I PLAY
IN THE



Share your **#IPlayInTheG** story.



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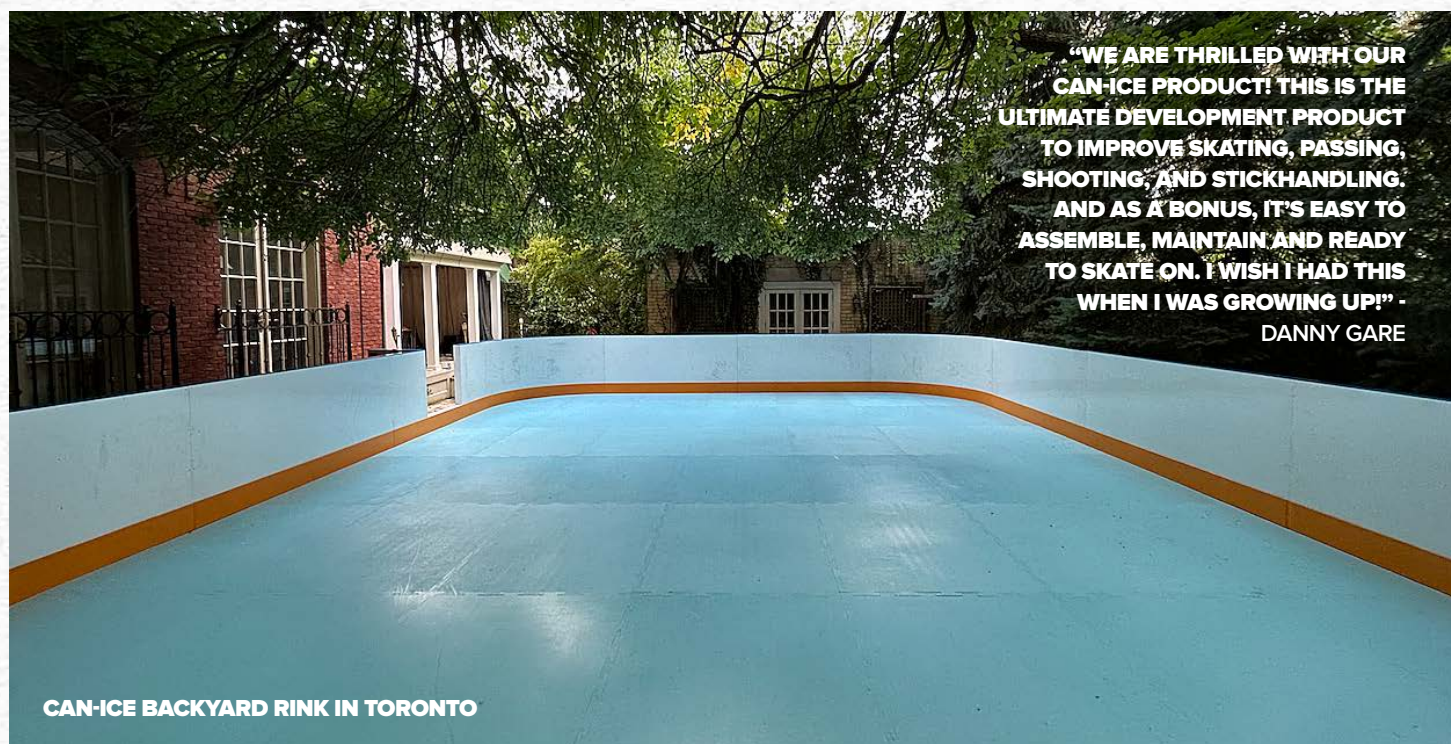
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THE EVOLUTION OF SYNTHETIC ICE

AND WHY EVERY HOCKEY PLAYER SHOULD BE TRAINING ON IT.



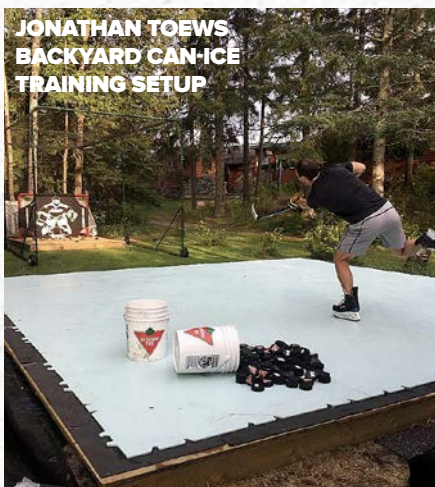
"WE ARE THRILLED WITH OUR CAN-ICE PRODUCT! THIS IS THE ULTIMATE DEVELOPMENT PRODUCT TO IMPROVE SKATING, PASSING, SHOOTING, AND STICKHANDLING. AND AS A BONUS, IT'S EASY TO ASSEMBLE, MAINTAIN AND READY TO SKATE ON. I WISH I HAD THIS WHEN I WAS GROWING UP!" - DANNY GARE

CAN-ICE BACKYARD RINK IN TORONTO

Since the inception of Can-Ice 15 years ago, Co-Founder and NHL Alumni Danny Gare understood from his own experience the value and need for at-home-training-aids. An NHL goal-scoring-leader in 1980 and a 13-year playing career that saw Danny captain the Buffalo Sabres and Detroit Red Wings; he vowed to create something once he retired, that would help players develop their skills by skating more and shooting more!

Using a makeshift surface from plywood and ski wax, Danny will confirm his belief that his 56 goals in 1980 (most goals in the NHL that season) was a result of the extra hours he logged training-at-home.

Having skated on every synthetic surface during his NHL career [1974-1987], it was through



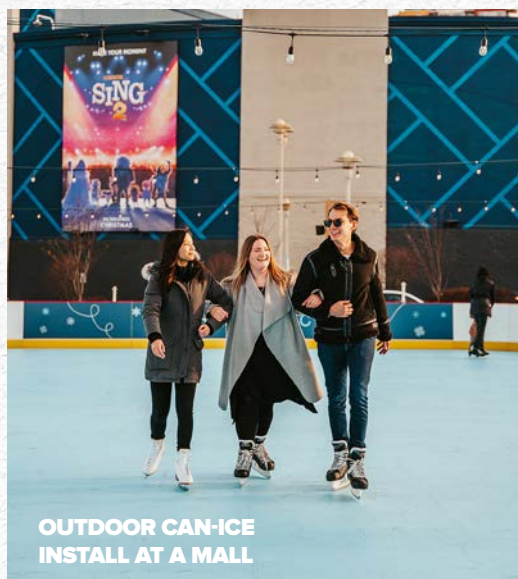
JONATHAN TOEWS BACKYARD CAN-ICE TRAINING SETUP

intensive research and development that the formulation and manufacturing of Can-Ice's product was spawned. Manufactured with a superior glide, Can-Ice allows for training on skates to mimic and reinforce the mechanics of skating, shooting, and stickhandling. Anything you do on ice can be replicated on Can-Ice.

Can-Ice has become the preferred synthetic ice of many NHL'ers including Kucherov, Vasilevskiy, Crosby, Marchessault, Pavelski, Toews (and many more), providing them with a viable at-home-training surface for additional skill development. Can-Ice can be found in countless training centres across North America and in international markets, with several in Japan, Australia, China, Europe and even in unsuspecting markets such as India. In 2020 the pandemic

significantly reduced (or entirely stopped) league play and training for hockey players and athletes of all sports; Can-Ice saw a massive increase in sales with many at-home installations that allowed players to continue developing their skills during the ongoing lockdowns.

With a growing presence in the Canadian marketplace, Can-Ice has strong ties to the GTHL. Chief Operating Officer, Steven J. Wong knows firsthand the advantage(s) of at-home-training as evidenced by his son, James Wong, who started playing in the 'G when he was 11 years old. A versatile player (a forward who played defence for most of the season to fill-in for a teammate due to injury) of the 2023 U18 AAA Toronto Junior Canadians who were League, Playoff and OHF Champions; James was also Captain of the



OUTDOOR CAN-ICE INSTALL AT A MALL

2022 U18 AAA Toronto Red Wings. James started hockey relatively late in life compared to his peers as he didn't put skates on for the first time until he was 10 years old. Hence, synthetic ice training played an invaluable role for catching up to the pack in terms of skating, shooting, and stickhandling. Often accompanying his dad at event activations and himself a knowledgeable product expert, Can-Ice has provided him with the countless hours of hockey skill development to aim higher and achieve more in the sport he loves.

For more information visit www.can-ice.com and be sure to watch Hockey Day in Canada on January 20, 2024 in Victoria BC, where Ron Maclean will be hosting/skating on a custom Can-Ice rink for the 13 hour nationwide broadcast!



"Not only is Can-Ice the choice of hockey players, figure skating World Champion and Olympic medalist Elvis Stojko is a repeat buyer of the product. "I've used every brand of synthetic ice over the past 30 years and Can-Ice is by far the best. I initially purchased Can-Ice for my wife and I to practice at home, we filled our entire basement with it. We love it so much, we bought more and expanded our surface into the back yard!"

ELVIS STOJKO

Canadian Figure Skater Legend



"I researched everything about synthetic ice because I wanted the absolute best, I even visited all the manufacturers. Then I called (Sidney) Crosby because I knew he used Can-Ice and he confirmed my research and told me Can-Ice is the best synthetic ice barring none."

VINCENT LECAVALIER

NHL Alumni, former Captain of the Tampa Bay Lightning



"Without Can-Ice, there's no chance I'd be playing AAA hockey in the GTHL!"

JAMES WONG

GTHL Player



"I thought I had the best synthetic ice in my garage but then I used Can-Ice and I realized it was way better. I immediately dumped my synthetic ice in the garbage and placed my order for Can-Ice!"

NIKITA KUCHEROV

Tampa Bay Lightning

MY HOCKEY HERO ESSAY CONTEST

PRESENTED BY NEWAGE PRODUCTS



CONGRATULATIONS TO RAOUL FORTIER, WINNER OF MY HOCKEY HERO ESSAY CONTEST PRESENTED BY NEWAGE PRODUCTS

Congratulations to Raoul Fortier, winner of My Hockey Hero Essay Contest presented by NewAge Products

On Saturday, October 21, NewAge Products recognized **Raoul Fortier** as the winner of the My Hockey Hero Essay Contest as part of GTHL Puck Drop Weekend festivities. Click [here](#) to watch the presentation!

Raoul, hockey volunteer for over seven years and current head coach of the Under-12 George Bell Select team, was the focus of an essay submitted by Isabelle Faucher. As the winning submission, Raoul is the recipient of the **Pro Series 8 Piece Cabinet Set** (\$3500 value) courtesy of NewAge Products.

NewAge Products is Toronto's premium manufacturer of best-in-class solutions to organize and beautify living spaces with garage storage systems, outdoor kitchen solutions, and incredible organization and entertainment ideas for inside the home. Visit their North York showroom at 1190 Caledonia Road.



CUSTOMIZED TROPHIES SOURCED BY RAOUL AND HANDED OUT TO EACH PLAYER AT THE END OF THE SEASON.

My Hockey Hero

By: Isabelle Faucher

My hockey hero is **Raoul Fortier**.

Raoul has been involved in youth hockey for over seven years, initially in a Team Manager role for our son's team, and for the last three hockey seasons as head coach of the George Bell Hockey Association Select Team. Raoul coached the U10 team in 2021-22, the U11 team in 2022-23, and is currently coaching U12.

What makes Raoul a hockey hero is his tremendous dedication to his players and his profound desire to ensure that their hockey experience is a fun and memorable one. This is exemplified by the "Player of Game" award that Raoul put in place last season. Raoul leveraged his woodworking skills to make a bell-themed medallion (a nod to our club's logo), which is awarded at the end of each game to a player that stood out, whether it be in terms of their level of effort, their execution of a particular task (e.g.: keeping to one's position), or another positive aspect of their game. The player keeps the award until the next game. In consultation with the assistant managers, Raoul is careful to ensure that each player receives the award at least once during the season.

At the end of each hockey season that Raoul has been involved in (either as a manager or a coach), Raoul has taken the lead in sourcing handmade trophies, customized with a special attribute or quality for every player.

Lastly, at the end of year party for the 2022-23 season, he delivered a speech in which he thoughtfully addressed each player.

Another reason why Raoul is my hockey hero is the effort he puts into developing each of his players and in helping them grow in the sport. With his drawing pad and erasable marker in hand, he takes the time to explain important hockey concepts, such as offsides, and to provide one-on-one feedback to every player following a game. He always delivers a post-game speech that focuses both on the positive elements of the match, as well as the things that the players need to continue working on.

Two of Raoul's players have put into their own words why Coach Raoul is their Hockey Hero.

"Coach Raoul is a hockey hero because he never gets mad at us if we mess up. He just helps us work on that in the next practice. He's really good at seeing what we need to work on and giving us tips to get better." – Body Krauser, 12 years old, coached by Raoul for the past two hockey seasons.

"Coach Raoul helped me get better. It's not all about the score, hockey is about working together. Our coach has a growing mindset, he says we can always improve and to never give up. I think our coach should win because he always helps all the players improve." – Dimitri Kyrilangitses, 12 years old, coached by Raoul for the past three hockey seasons. 🍁

Congratulations to Shannon Crookston and Steve Bebis, finalists of My Hockey Hero Essay Contest presented by NewAge Products

The Greater Toronto Hockey League and NewAge Products are proud to congratulate **Shannon Crookston** and **Steve Bebis** for being named finalists of the My Hockey Hero Essay Contest. As finalists, both Shannon and Steve receive a **Pro Series Mobile Utility Cart** (\$299 value) courtesy of NewAge Products.

Shannon, General Manager for the Scarborough Young Bruins and manager of three hockey teams, was nominated by Maclean Markham of the U15 'AA' Scarborough Young Bruins. In the essay submission, Maclean recognizes the incredible efforts Shannon puts forward to help organize not only their team, but two others as well. Additionally, Maclean credits Shannon for the Young Bruins' engagement in the community and with charitable initiatives throughout the season.

Steve, Head Coach of both the U11 'AA' Greater Toronto Capitals and the U7 Vaughan Rangers Select team, was nominated by U11 'AA' Capitals player, Matthew Zeppieri. With his essay submission, Matthew acknowledges the support and mentorship consistently provided by Coach Steve.



CONGRATULATIONS TO SHANNON CROOKSTON, FINALIST OF MY HOCKEY HERO ESSAY

My Hockey Hero: Shannon Crookston

By: Maclean Markham

Shannon Crookston is my hockey hero for many reasons. She has four kids of her own, her oldest son is on my hockey team. After our previous manager left, Shannon stepped up and helped our team rebuild. I am glad she stepped up because I think she is a good manager.

Shannon helps our team with orders, for example jerseys, track suits, and team clothing. She is well organized with planning team events and tournaments. She gets along well with players

and parents, and is very approachable. She has been managing our team for about three years and she has done so much for the team in those few years. She organizes our team photo day, and chooses what jerseys we wear and what photos we take. Shannon never really stops working for our team, during the fall, winter, and spring, we have regular season and playoffs and in the summer, we do dry land and training camp.

Shannon helps with all the paperwork, therefore, making sure people are properly signed up, and she makes sure everyone has paid. She keeps up with our parents and helps them to pay or sign up for the season. She works with the GTHL with all the team's information and paperwork. Shannon has all of her paperwork on a spreadsheet so it is organized.

Whenever we have tournaments, we have team dinners and Shannon gets the reservation for the team. She also chooses the hotel that we stay in and makes sure it is close to the arena. She makes sure it is safe and enjoyable.

We have done many charities initiatives. We have been doing "love boxes." Shannon organized the delivery of the "love boxes." A love box is a box that is labelled by gender and age that is put together normally around Christmas time and they give the box to the assigned person. This person is in the hospital for the holidays and this charity is designed to cheer them up for the holidays. We do it every year and my hockey team really enjoys it. Shannon organizes us and helps us do community work, and we do many food drives throughout the year to participate in the community.

Shannon also manages more than one team; she manages three including mine, which means she does all of that for three separate teams in the Scarborough Young Bruins organization. Shannon is not just a manager, she is a friend and a parent. She knows everyone's name and always asks how you are doing. That is why Shannon Crookston is my hockey hero. 🍁



CONGRATULATIONS TO STEVE BEBIS, FINALISTS OF MY HOCKEY HERO ESSAY

My Hockey Hero: Steve Bebis

By: Matthew Zeppieri

My Under-11 'AA' hockey coach, Steve, is my hero because he's not just a coach; he's a mentor, a friend, and someone I look up to. Coach Steve has had a big impact on my life, both on and off the ice.

First of all, Coach Steve knows so much about hockey. He's like a hockey encyclopedia! He teaches us everything, from how to skate faster to how to take the perfect slapshot. But what makes Coach Steve my hero is that he's patient and passionate. Sometimes, when we make mistakes, he does get frustrated, but only because he wants us to perform better. He pushes us to be our best, and that makes me want to do my best every time I step onto the ice.

Coach Steve also teaches us about teamwork. He says that hockey is not just about one player; it's about the whole team working together. He's always telling us to pass the puck and help our teammates. In our team meetings, he encourages us to define our individual and team goals collectively, something we can measure. That way, we have something we can all work towards, just like a championship we want to win!

Another reason why Coach Steve is my hero is because he's so dedicated. He always comes prepared with the right drills to work on our strengths and weaknesses. It's like he has a magical playbook just for our team!

He cares so much about making us better players. Even though he's the head coach and is on the bench at all times, he's like a second dad to us, always there to support and encourage us.

Coach Steve's dedication is incredible. He not only teaches us about hockey but also about life. He asks us about our day at school and listens when we have problems. He even gives us advice on how to handle tough situations. I remember one time when I was feeling really down because we lost a big game. Coach Steve talked to me and said, "It's not about winning or losing; it's about always giving your best." Those words stuck with me, and now I try to give my best not just in hockey but in everything I do.

When it comes to our games, Coach Steve is right there on the bench, guiding us and shouting out encouragement. He's our biggest fan, and it means the world to us. Knowing that he's there, supporting us no matter what, gives us the confidence to do our best on the ice.

In conclusion, my U11 'AA' hockey coach, Coach Steve, is my hero because he teaches me about hockey, teamwork, and life. He's patient, passionate, and dedicated. He's not just a coach; he's a role model. I want to be like him when I grow up, both as a hockey player and as a person.

Coach Steve, thank you for being the best coach and hero I could ever ask for. Your dedication and support mean more to me than words can express, and I'm proud to have you as my coach and mentor. 🍁

GEORGE BELL HOCKEY ASSOCIATION, WHITEFISH RIVER FIRST NATION COME TOGETHER FOR FIRST LEG OF EXCHANGE PROGRAM

► BY STEPHANIE CORATTI

GEORGE BELL TITANS WITH THE WHITEFISH RIVER FIRST NATION PLAYERS



GBHA - WRFN

On October 27-29, the Under-13 'A' George Bell Titans welcomed participants from Whitefish River First Nation to Toronto. The weekend served as the first leg of the 2023-24 season's Whitefish River First Nation and Greater Toronto Hockey League home-and-home exchange.

The youth from Whitefish River First Nation arrived at George Bell Arena on Friday afternoon. Greeting them were the U13 'A' George Bell Titans, with each player sharing one of their personal jerseys with a buddy. After introductions and icebreakers, the participants took to the ice for a session filled with skill development, fun, and a few games.

Following the ice session, the groups shared

a Portuguese dinner together before heading back to their homes and the hotel ahead of a busy Saturday.

Saturday began with a trip downtown on the subway, a first for many of the Whitefish River First Nation participants. The first stop was at MLSE LaunchPad where after lunch, the players got the opportunity to rotate through rock climbing, floor hockey, and other game stations full of activity and laughter.

SATURDAY BEGAN WITH A TRIP DOWNTOWN ON THE SUBWAY, A FIRST FOR MANY OF THE WHITEFISH RIVER FIRST NATION PARTICIPANTS.

"I think the whole tone of the weekend reflected a deep understanding of what the initiative is about: coming together in a spirit of mutual understanding and reconciliation, with hockey as the vehicle for doing so," Steve Whitaker, Principal of Shawanosowe School, shared, adding that he

can remember of a number of instances where a GTHL player deliberately reached out to assist and include one of the Whitefish River First Nation players. "Students have expressed their sense of achievement at having become better skaters and their enjoyment at having been able to visit so many new and interesting places."

From MLSE LaunchPad, the participants made their way to the University of Toronto. Time on campus started with an educational visit to the First Nations House, through to mini tours of academic opportunities that exist for the future, and capped off with a University of Toronto Varsity Blues men's hockey game at Varsity Arena.

Prior to taking in the game, special guests from both the men's and women's Varsity Blues hockey teams joined the exchange for dinner. GTHL alumnus Owen Robinson was among a few men's Varsity Blues players who spoke about the importance of academics alongside athletics, while women's players Sophie Grawbarger, Kaitlyn McKnight, Emma Potter, and Avery Lee shared their career journeys thus far.

"As an educator, I am thrilled that their hearts and minds have been opened to some new possibilities around their future in education, and the First Nations House provided an unscripted, yet meaningful opportunity for an introduction to Anishinaabek culture that participants will experience more of in February," Whitaker concluded.

The third and final day of the Toronto leg finished off with a second on-ice session and the participants offering a, "see you later" to their new friends.

The second leg of the 2023-24 Whitefish River First Nation X GTHL exchange will take place in February, with the U13 'A' George Bell Titans travelling to Whitefish River.



VARSITY BLUES GAME

GBHA - WRFN

GBHA - WRPFN



PARTICIPANTS WITH WOMEN VARSITY BLUES

The exchange program strives to provide opportunities to GTHL and First Nations players, parents, and other participants to develop relationships, fellowship, and a cultural understanding through a shared passion for the game of hockey. For younger recreational-level players and

players who have not previously played hockey, the exchange aims to provide introductory skill development opportunities (both on and off the ice) to encourage further participation in the game of hockey, while fostering new learning experiences and relationships. ❄️

COMMITTEE

Steve Whitaker

Principal, Shawanosowe School, Whitefish River First Nation

Stephen Nahwegahbow

Education Manager, Whitefish River First Nation

Stephanie Hyde

Manager, Hockey Development and Community Outreach, GTHL

Michael Purdy

Director, GTHL

John Bell

General Manager, George Bell Hockey Association

Anver Emon

Co-Manager, U13 'A' George Bell team



WEEKEND PHOTO GALLERY

To view all the photos from the weekend, [click here](#).



WHITEFISH RIVER FIRST NATION

To learn more about the Whitefish River First Nation X GTHL exchange program, [click here](#).



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HOCKEY HALL of FAME DIVERSITY IN HOCKEY PROGRAM



EDUCATE, EMPOWER, ENCOURAGE

The Hockey Hall of Fame Diversity in Hockey Program utilizes these four **Principles of Diversity** – **allyship, embracing change, equity, and respect** – to teach and empower youth from a sports and social perspective.

Presented by the Hockey Hall of Fame's lead on diversity, Kevin Yearwood, sessions will spotlight the stories of ground-breakers, today's leaders, and issues challenging inclusiveness in hockey. Each presentation is tailorable to your region, demographic and/or requested focus and is augmented through captivating photographs, videos, artifacts and first-person accounts.

Combining the past with present-day headlines will provide an ideal platform for today's youth to examine, understand and champion diversity. Ideal for students grade 6 to 12 or hockey teams U12 to U18.



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS



EMBRACING CHANGE



BUILDING ALLIANCES

CURRICULUM FOCI:

Ethnicity in Hockey focuses on the plight of visible minorities as well as newer immigrant cultures.

Marginalized People in Top Levels of Pro Hockey looks at pioneers who opened doors and paved the way for hockey players of different ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation.

Women in Hockey pays tribute to the players and teams who helped popularize the female game.

Accessible Hockey delves into the variations of hockey played by those with physical disabilities, including hearing impaired hockey associations and electric wheelchair hockey.

For more information or to make a booking, please contact Kevin Yearwood at 416-360-7735 x297 or kyearwood@hhof.com | Learn more at HHOF.com/diversity



HHOF Archives

PRESTON RIVULETTES 1931-1940

CREATING SPACE FOR ALL TO PLAY

▶ BY KEVIN YEARWOOD

It's considered the fastest game on ice, but culturally the game of hockey is seen as slow to evolve. In recent years significant strides have been made to improve diversity on the ice and in the stands. Since then, the concept of diversity in hockey has emerged as a powerful force, reshaping the game and challenging long-standing norms and ideas.

The Hockey Hall of Fame, in conjunction with Scotiabank, is pleased to introduce a brand new program that pays homage to those pioneers who confronted discrimination from the hockey world and through their perseverance, talent and courage, ultimately enriched the landscape of hockey and established a tangible forum in which to fight prejudices and champion inclusivity.

The Diversity in Hockey Program (DHIP) is designed to educate middle school and high school students, about the importance of diversity and inclusion. The DIHP will provide students with the tools and knowledge needed to become active allies in promoting a more inclusive environment for all.

As historians, a key task is to uncover stories and individuals that deal with diversity from all perspectives – through the lens of gender, race, language, religion, sexual orientation or physical disability – to ensure that no groups remain marginalized within the diversity movement. Only through this process can we fully examine and identify the core elements that either hinder or foster inclusivity, thereby leaving no one behind.

Through a virtual presentation involving a discussion that includes hockey artifacts, students will learn about the history of diversity in hockey and how it enriches our society. The goal of DHIP is to break down barriers, help build alliances and create leaders.

Hockey has the power to change culture and to inspire creativity and hope. It also possesses the immense power to unite people. Inclusion in the game not only builds self esteem, it also strengthens the sense of connection we have with others.

Get on board with this most important movement in sports!

NOTABLE MOMENTS IN HOCKEY'S DIVERSITY STORY

ICE QUEENS

Preston Rivulettes Women's hockey team won four Dominion Championships and ten Ontario titles between 1931-1940. The team played over 350 games and had a winning percentage of over 95, a record unmatched in the history of Women's hockey. Some would argue they are one of the greatest hockey teams ever assembled.

HOCKEY'S TRUE TRAILBLAZER

Larry Kwong was the first non-white player to play in an NHL game. After a strong performance in the minor leagues Kwong earned a call-up to the New York Rangers. On March 13, 1948 Larry played in a game versus the Montreal Canadiens. He played just one shift, but he opened the door for many other Pan Asian athletes to pursue their hockey dreams at the highest level.



VALLEYFIELD BRAVES 1950-51

HHOF Archives



SHANDOR ALPHONSO FIRST NHL GAME

HHOF Archives

GTHL ALUMNI BREAKING BARRIERS

NHL Linesman Shandor Alphonso #52 during a National Hockey League game on October 17, 2014. The former GTHL linesman is the second person of colour to wear the stripes in the NHL game.



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