

# Lloydminster Minor Hockey

## **General Manager Annual Report 2020/21**

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Hello Members,

To say that the 2020/2021 Hockey Season is one to forget is a huge understatement. The challenges and frustration that all our players, coaches, managers, referees, volunteers, parents, fans and LMHA experienced was most definitely unprecedented. I want to send a huge shout out to everyone for the way you all persevered and made the best of an extremely difficult pandemic hockey season.

I want to thank all the Executive Committee and Board Members for all the hard work they did to keep our association running. There were extra meetings called throughout the year to review the latest health orders, so we could try to minimize the impacts to our membership. Also, a big thanks to Maryann for all she does in the LMHA Office. Maryann was constantly changing ice schedules, sending out the latest health orders and facility guidelines, fielding calls at the office, assisting people with registration, assisting the LMHA Elite Division and much, much more.

To the board members who are moving on, thank you for your involvement on the LMHA Board. Your time and effort volunteering to help guide the Association is appreciated. To the new board members who are joining on, I look forward to working with you as we prepare for the 2021-2022 hockey season.

We delayed registration last year by one month so we could better understand some of the COVID-19 rules we were going to need to follow. Registration opened June 1<sup>st</sup> instead of May 1<sup>st</sup>. Our overall registration numbers were down about 10% from the previous year. We had a maximum of 1002 participants from Pond Hockey, Mainstream and Elite Teams. This number did decline from November to January as the Pandemic continued to interfere with the hockey season.

We were about one week later than normal getting on the ice to start team selection/formation. Once again independent evaluators were used to help with the difficult task of placing our participants where they belong so they can enjoy a challenging and rewarding hockey season at their skill level. For the most part I was told that the process worked well for all the teams. This year was made even more challenging as all participants needed to skate and be evaluated in physically distanced skates. In addition, all participants were to remain in their own cohort. This meant that players could not be moved from one group to another during the evaluation process. Despite all the challenges we feel our team formation went very well.

For the most part our association as a whole saw very little game action in their respective leagues before we were shutdown on November 27<sup>th</sup> by a Saskatchewan Health Order. I'm sure you are all aware that although we are members of Hockey Alberta, the City of Lloydminster follows the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA). We were constantly needing to juggle the regulations between what Alberta Health Services (AHS) allowed versus SHA's guidelines. Life on the border following two different Governments definitely presented us with some unplanned difficulties managing an already difficult situation. It was a small win at the end of the year when we were able to offer a Development Season to our members. We had about 60 – 65% of our members participate in the six-week Development season. Thanks to all the coaches, managers and organizers who participated in getting the players back on the ice.

Despite the difficulties of COVID-19 we did add a new Hockey program to LMHA in the U11 division. With the co-operation of Hockey Alberta, a 7 team U11 Tier one league was formed in the Northern Alberta Interlock (NAI) League. This league was supported by 6 Minor Hockey Associations. Our team played two exhibition games and did not get to play any league games. A disappointing result considering all the excitement around the newly formed league.

These are still very busy times on the hockey scene in Alberta. Many of the league AGM's are being held as well as Hockey Alberta meetings for the different hockey programs. We at LMHA have continued on with our regular monthly board meetings, preparation for our own AGM, recruitment of new Board members, recruitment of Coaches and more.

I'm sure there is more information I could share here but I think I covered the big points. I look forward to returning to the ice for the 2021-2022 season in the fall with some sense of normality. I think everyone is ready to get back to the rink and see some hockey played the way it was before COVID-19. Watch our website for all the latest news regarding the game we love called hockey.

Submitted by: Dean C. Stark