Chebucto Minor Hockey Association

2021-2022 Development Report

**Introduction**

This was my fourth year as the VP of Development, and I continue to see and hear about growth and development in many players, coaches, and teams within our association. Without the dedication of our players, volunteer coaches, managers, parents, officials, and again this year, our amazing safety reps, our association would not be on the positive track that we are on. I think that our small association has proven that we are competitive and hard-working but that there is still room to grow. The development season begins early with preparations for pre-season conditioning camps and tryouts.

**Preseason**

This preseason again presented us with several challenges. The first was ensuring that we were able to offer a safe and challenging experience for our players within the Return to Play plan established by Hockey Nova Scotia. Secondly, we needed to create a plan that was cost-friendly for players. Fortunately, this year we were able to secure ice for the month of September at the Halifax Forum for the entire preseason. This allowed all of our players the opportunity to get on the ice earlier than in previous years.

We offered our packages, or BLOCKS as we called them, in groups of 5. Players could choose to participate for 1 or 2 blocks. From our perspective, the turnout exceeded expectations. This provided our players with a good foundation going into the first weekend of tryouts.

**Development Equipment**

During the past season, I wasn’t able to get access to the rink during many teams' practices. This was largely due to the safety guidelines that were put in place. From what I was able to see and by what I heard from coaches, some of the equipment that we were able to secure in previous seasons was put to good use. The one downside that many teams have is that, for most, they have to practice in facilities other than our home rink. This makes using development aids very challenging. I would welcome any feedback on how more coaches and teams could access the variety of equipment that we have or if anyone knows of something that we currently don’t have that we may need.

**Development Weekend**

Unfortunately, as was the case the past few seasons, Development Weekend was cancelled this past year. Hopefully, this will return in some capacity in the upcoming season, as many players and coaches have benefited from this in the past. In the meantime, in partnership with other associations, we are offering the first Halifax Coaches Conference, a free virtual clinic to be held from Thursday, May 26th through Saturday, May 28th. All coaches will receive an emailed invitation to register.

**In-season development**

With limited ice available, it is difficult to schedule in-season development. However, this year we were able to block two hours on Saturdays' to offer opportunities to our players. Unfortunately, these times often conflicted with existing schedules, and attendance reflected that. Some players were able to take advantage prior to the COVID shutdown, and once we returned to team activities, this ice was used to make up for missed practices and games.

**Where do we go from here?**

In recent years, ice time has been a major hurdle, both in terms of the pre-season and especially during the season. I personally believe that when our association had access to ice in mid-to-late August, our players were able to participate in additional development, 3 on 3, and be on the ice earlier in general. This directly related to many teams' having success, and for those that remember, there were many exciting games that were attended by high numbers of players and parents.

As a small association, we need to take advantage of any opportunity that we can, and having ice available earlier will only further our players' development. Having ice available specifically for individual skill development during the season would also be a huge benefit. In an ideal world, we could offer each player, at a minimum, an additional hour of skill development per month, above and beyond their team practices. This individualized skill focus could then be used to support a specific team structure.

Finally, I raised this idea last year and would still welcome volunteers to join me as part of a committee to create an association development plan. This will cover IP through Midget and will become a blueprint for coaches and players to refer to from year to year. The goal would be to create a database of drills and concepts for coaches. Topics to consider will be what types of skills should be focused on and at what levels; types of systems to introduce and when is an appropriate time to do it; and overall, to enhance our players' habits and game play tactics.

If this interests you, please feel free to contact me at : development@chebucto.ca

**Coaches' Game**

We were able to cap off our season with a return to our coaches' game. First, thanks to all the coaches who attended to show off their skills, but more importantly, to all the players and families who showed up to show support and a big thank you to our great coaches. We were treated to a fast-paced game! A special thanks to former Chebucto alumni and Canadian National Women's Team, and Olympic Champion Coach, Troy Ryan, for taking time out of his schedule to attend the game. He provided some kind words and swag for our coaches and fans. Finally, thanks to the many volunteers, officials, Joe at Rink Ratz, Kelly at Headline Promotions, Kimmie’s Canteen, and, of course, our Lions Rink staff for not only a successful evening, but a great season.

Regards

Ja-red Glazebrook

VP of Development