

Orleans Minor Hockey Association (OMHA)
President's Report
2017 – 2018 Season

Another great hockey season has come and gone at the OMHA! A lot was accomplished this season, and first and foremost I want to thank all of the many volunteers who helped out in all aspects of the game. From the great Board of Directors that I have had the privilege to serve with, the extended board members (Conveners, Ice Scheduler, Webmaster, Communications and Public Relations and Equipment Managers), the Coach Mentorship Program, the Atom Tournament organizers, the coaches and assistant coaches, managers, trainers, Scoreboard/Game sheet operators, and everyone else who helped out – A really BIG THANK YOU!

This season was another successful season with 17 of 25 teams moving past the Round Robin stage of the playoffs, playing in the quarterfinals. 10 teams made it past the quarterfinals, into the semifinals. And finally, 8 of our teams made it to the GHA finals (the most since 2012-2013) with two teams being victorious and adding more banners to our rafters. This is a testament to the extraordinary efforts and time invested by our Coach Mentorship Program led by Kevin Gallagher and our Coach Community of Practice (CCoP). Our Mentorship program ongoing efforts in helping our association reap the rewards of having a more defined coaching strategy across the Association. Coaches and assistant coaches are better able to instruct our players and help them in the ongoing development at all levels. In addition, the mentorship program also ran our skating program for our Novice through Peewee divisions as well as our goalie clinics for our house league players.

And, as much as holding banners is a mark of success, it is not everything. We do not measure success by the hardware and banners we collect or by the number of wins and losses or by what is reflected on the score board. We measure success using the following three key indicators:

- As a player, did you benefit from increased individual and team skills?
- As a player, did you have fun playing this great game?
- Will you return next season in order to continue your journey?

If the response to all three questions is “YES”, then we have had a successful season. Success can also be measured by the enthusiasm and excitement that our teams are generating for, and by, our players. They are all creating a wonderful hockey environment for the players, we hear many stories about fantastic team events, team fundraising, team volunteerism and exciting tournament experiences.

Orleans Rush:

Now, after completing our fourth season wearing the “RUSH” jersey, it was great to see how much everyone still loves being an “Orleans RUSH”. The smiles that was evident as our hockey players skated around with their Orleans RUSH sweaters was great to see. And to watch the players proudly wear their various “Rush Wear”; everything from Rush coats to ball caps and toques and everything in between truly reflected their sense of belonging to what we consider to be a wonderful and exciting hockey association.

Integrated Rep B Program:

In year three of our integrated Rep B Program. Blackburn, Orleans and Gloucester Centre and the results have been nothing short of staggering. We were able to ice nine very competitive teams this season, whereby four of the teams went on to play in the A Championship playoffs and one winning it all (Major Atom Blues); while the other five played in the B playoffs with 3 teams making it to the finals and two emerging as victorious (Major Peewee and Major Midget).

Volunteer Appreciation Night:

On April 20, 2018 at the Broadway's Bar and Grill restaurant, approximately 130 Orleans Rush and Blues volunteers gathered to celebrate a year where their efforts and dedication to their teams and association did not go unnoticed as, in humble fashion, the Orleans Minor Hockey Association provided a Lasagna dinner complete with Caesar salad, desert and drinks. Each volunteer was given a token gift of appreciation of a beautiful cooler, etched with our Rush Logo. A big thank you goes to Deborah Evraire for these wonderful creations. There were also some great door prizes (10 awesome NHL jerseys, an Ottawa 67's game worn jersey. Congratulations to all of the lucky winners.

A BIG THANK YOU goes to Clarence Ruddy, our Equipment Manager, for playing fantastic live music from the 60's, 70's and 80's

In our third year of bringing back a tradition of old (almost 20 years) whereby we can bring all of our volunteers together in one room to be recognized as the very backbone of our association with a small token of our appreciation. This also allows everyone to meet each other and for the OMHA board to get to know a little bit more about who's selflessly giving of their time to make our players' hockey experience a positive one.

We took the liberty of presenting Joel Newheimer with the OMHA Volunteer of the year award. Congratulations Joel for your selfless giving of your time and dedication to our association (Director of Novice/Atom, Coach, Coach Mentorship Program).

Scotiabank NHL 100 Winter Classic:

This year was especially exciting for our Atom A team as this team of 9 – 10 year olds lead by Head Coach James Berry and his coaching staff, were selected by Scotiabank to represent Ottawa at the NHL 100 Winter Classic shinny game versus an Atom A team from Montreal. Our kids were treated like kings and queens as they were treated to an entire weekend of activities including playing shinny with Ottawa Senators and Montreal Canadiens alumni players. Also, each player and both their parents got free tickets to see the actual NHL 100 Winter Classic game between the Ottawa Senators and the Montreal Canadiens during Hockey Night in Canada. There was even a 30 seconds vignette shown during the first intermission. Pretty darn cool eh? By the way, the Senators shut out the Canadiens 3 – 0.

Annual Brad Girouard Award:

In a hockey dressing room there are a varied lot of characters awaiting the coach's signal, "The ice is ready".

Up from the bench the players move as one unit because they are after all, a team with a common purpose. Among this team are individuals each with their own contributing talents. There is the high scorer, the setup man, the stalwart defenseman and determined goaltender. These players are easily identified and looked upon to lead the team to victory. But there is another player whose contribution is not measured in points or blocked shots. That player carries the team spirit and injects the intangible joy that surrounds minor hockey and teamwork. Every team has one; every team needs one if that team is to gain the ultimate objective which is - camaraderie and belonging. The players know the individual described here, the team identifies with this character.

Bradley Girouard was such a player in 1997, at eighteen, he was a victim of a careless driver, leaving Orleans with a

major void.

His value to his team and our organization was evident so much so, that the Orleans Minor Hockey Association dedicated a trophy in his honour, to recognize the player that most contributes to their team by overcoming personal obstacles yet exhibiting a display of friendship to others to enhance the love of the game. It is fitting that this trophy bear Bradley's name. To know him better, visit his memory case adorning the hall between the Orleans Arenas. In his final act of selflessness, Bradley donated his organs so that others may enjoy a better life. The last trophy he received (posthumously) is a medal from a grateful Children's Hospital.

The Bradley Girouard Trophy is presented annually to the player that best personifies minor hockey's objective, an infectious joy of hockey as determined by grateful teammates. The player receiving this acknowledgement has made hockey a rewarding experience for all.

For 20 years, Ted and Barb Girouard, parents of Bradley Girouard have been presenting these trophies in Brad's honour. This year's recipients are:

Dominic Malouin	Novice
Amanda Johnson	Atom
Cole Nichols	Pee-Wee
Remi Pilon	Bantam
Alexis Dube	Midget

To this end, I would like to say that the information I share within this report is but a sample of what our great association accomplished this season as we do in past seasons; all of which fills me with such pride only matched by the size of our association and the beating hearts of our board members (executive and extended) and the numerous volunteers who make it all happen.

Thank you all!

Yours in hockey,

Gilles Vanasse
President
Orleans Minor Hockey Association (OMHA)