

MRO Girls Hockey SEASON 2012-2013

The girls had a very strong season this year. We had over 120 girls register this year. Our girls played on 10 teams overall, they were:

Atom A, Atom B, PW AA, PW A, Bantam AA, Bantam A, Bantam B, Midget AA, Midget A, and Junior A.

We even had one girl playing in a VO Atom BB team. MRO hosts all of the single letter teams. While our partners hosted the AA teams, however we took an active role on these teams.

Our girls program is growing rapidly and we have worked extremely hard to fully integrate the girls program into the MRO hockey association. I have truly enjoyed serving on this year's Board of Directors as we all share the view of equality for the girls and boys, and complete transparency throughout all the programs. We will continue to be a leader and the model organization when it comes to equality and fairness, and use common sense when applying very stringent hockey rules designed to govern boys hockey.

Our Association is only as strong as are members and volunteers are. With the rapid growth that we are experiencing, we created a subcommittee for the girls program. I thank the following people for accepting the following positions:

Director of Recruiting and Promotion HF : Martin Longchamps

MRO Head Coach HF : Marco Sulpizia

MRO Head Manager HF : Karen Brown

MRO Equipment Manager HF : Jacques Martin

Players Rep : Darrach Favretto

I look forward to working with this committee in the coming years. If anyone else would like to take help us out please let me know.

We will be holding a series of "fun days" which are days where we encourage girls that have never played hockey before to come try it for a day. All the equipment is supplied and this is an extremely effective activity for recruiting. We plan to hold these in St. Laurent and Westmount as well.

We will continue to battle all the inequalities that exist across the Lac St. Louis region. I was suspended this year for two weeks by Lac St. Louis for refusing their demand to put one of our Novice C girls in boys hockey. The request for this beginner Novice C girl to play with our beginner Atom B Girls team was made by her family. In the end, this young girl played all season with the Atom B team, and thrived within that group. Making great friends and developed very nicely, and hopefully she will continue to play hockey for many years to come. If we forced her to go back down to Novice C boys, she most probably would have quit hockey for good. My position was supported by our committee and I thank them for their support. I have informed Lac St. Louis that we will continue to do what is best for our girls the way our committee sees fit. I will continue to defend our girls' rights to play on girls teams, as is

very clearly written in the Administrative Rules in Hockey Quebec. They as a result saw it fit to issue me a two week suspension.

We are working very closely with the other regions within Lac St. Louis to strengthen their associations as well. We inherited a very rich program that has always been a leader in girls' hockey. We will continue this tradition by completely changing our approach and will build the model organization and give all the other regions the blueprint for them to follow for building girls programs. We have already started this process with DDO, Lakeshore and Westmount. At the end of the day we need strong associations to play against. This year we were the only association across Lac St. Louis to have an Atom B team.

Girls hockey's popularity has grown tremendously across Canada, which boasts over 90,000 girls playing, however in Quebec the number has not grown and we have just over 7,000 girls playing. In Lac St. Louis we have just over 500, when we should probably have close to 5,000 girls currently playing, if we kept up to the rate of growth that the rest of Canada experienced in the last 10 years.

We will continue to work across our region but also with all the regions across Quebec to lead with our passion, tradition and perseverance to promote the girls hockey in Quebec. Study after study show the long term benefits of girls playing team sports on their lives. Hockey provides so many life lessons to our children, however when you couple that with the benefits that girls show in their self-esteem, confidence in groups, leadership skill and skill learnt by being part of a team, we should be encouraging all girls to get involved in team sports and we are very lucky to have two of the best organizations, right here in our community, MRO girls hockey and CSMRO. We are going to be working closely with the Griffons in our recruiting efforts, having a common goal of getting girls in our community playing a team sport or both.

I was recently at a coaching seminar given by the Griffon, and the instructor asked, can you name an alumni of the Griffon who has gone on to win an Olympic Gold Medal, Numerous World Championships, Nation University Championships and who currently plays in the highest professional league? The answer was Catherine Ward. Yes she also played soccer. So there are also many studies showing the benefits to young athletes playing in complimentary sports. We have been approached this year to possibly build a hockey specific off-ice training run by the Griffons this winter. We look forward to working closely with CSMRO Griffons for the benefit of all the girls in our community.

In closing I would like to thank all of the volunteers, coaches and managers that helped out this year making it so successful. The smiles on our girls' faces makes all the effort worth it.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any suggestions on how we can make the program better next year.

Andrew Boosamra

Director Hockey Féminin MRO/VO