

Mount Pearl Blades Girls Hockey Program – 2020/2021 Year-end Report

Jeff Brown, MPMHA Girls Hockey Program Director

2020/2021 Season Highlights

- This season the Mount Pearl Blades Girls Hockey Program included teams in U12 and U15, along with a strong U9 program.
 - Due to registration numbers, our association collaborated with Paradise MHA to have them host our U20 players.
 - We will look to resume our U20 program in 2021/22 depending on numbers.

This season saw several disruptions due to Covid-19 along with policies and protocols that teams, including parents, had to adhere to. **I cannot thank the players, coaching staffs, and parents enough for their support and understanding.** I want to give a special shout out to our three Team Managers – Joanne Moores (U9), Patti McCarthy (U12), and Kerri Green (U15) – for their efforts ensuring protocols were communicated and followed.

Our U12 and U15 teams competed in the Metro Female League. Both teams saw their rosters shrink to 11+1 players due to Covid-19 restrictions. This season we implemented a 'single-carding' policy whereby players registered for either Minor or Girls but not both. This was due to ice availability and roster size as well as ensuring cohorts/bubbles were managed. All related again to Covid-19 restrictions. We will re-visit the single carding policy next season.

With a concerted effort during the summer and early fall, we were pleased to have identified a core group of U9 girls that helped attract more friends, bringing our total number to 30, with several on a waiting list. Despite the COVID adjustments, it was a fantastic season watching so many U9 girls improve and develop, both technically and as teammates. Whether new or more seasoned, the whole group improved by leaps and bounds, and their confidence during both practice and game play increased dramatically. It was a pleasure working with this group of kids and alongside a group of 6 other coaches and team manager. I can't wait for the new season. – Paul Preston, Head Coach Girls U9

- **Registration numbers:** After seeing a decline in 2019/2020, our goal this season was to realize modest growth and to bring back our U9 program. This season we had 60 players registered (**15% increase**) for our Girls Program, this despite our team roster size shrinking and the single-card policy. We also had a number of players on a wait list to register. This 15% year over year growth was in large part due to the return of our U9 Program which itself had 30 players registered.
- The Female Metro League itself realized significant growth this season, specifically in the U12 divisions. Leagues were tiered this season
- **Congratulations to the MP Blades Girls U12 team on capturing gold in the Female Metro League Tier 2A division!**





- We had an all-female coaching staff for our U15 team; we were excited to have them coach and mentor a young U15 team. Thank you Alison and Brittany for your leadership. Feedback from parents and players was outstanding.
- Year-end awards have all been handed out, congratulations to all winners.
- **Future assessment:** At the time of writing this report, it is still unknown what the 2021/22 Female season will look like. We hope for less disruptions compared to this previous season.
Assessments:
 - Our U12 team was a younger team, a few players moving to U15 next season. There are players moving from U9 to U12 next season, we hope to ice two U12 teams.
 - Our U15 team was relatively young, combined with U12 players moving up, we expect to have strong U15 numbers next season.
 - U18/20 (TBD) will continue to struggle with just a few players moving up and the team low in registration to begin with. We are working with other associations on plans for this division.
 - We expect another strong U9 program next season with many players already confirmed to return.

Suggestions and Improvements for Next Season

1. We have developed a multi-association committee to look at the U9 program and to see how we can interact more with other associations. It's a mixed age group, we want to ensure they continue to grow with the game.
2. Recommend a Girls Hockey developmental program (inner-association).
3. We are assessing the option of a pooled metro league, like that of the DJHL. Metro league challenges including ice-time, balanced teams, and growing the female game, may be addressed under this format.
4. I am leading a marketing group for the female metro league, this includes better promotional material, website, social media and community outreach. This will progress through out the summer.
5. Work with other associations to look at ways to attract and develop goaltenders to the Girls Programs

A BIG thanks to our coaching staffs and Team Managers for what was a memorable season for our players despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

We look forward to seeing everyone back at the rink next season.

Jeff Brown, MPMHA Girls Program Director