



**Halifax Hawks Minor Hockey Association
U7, U9 and Recreation Hockey Report**

U7 report – Todd MacEachern, Director

The Halifax Hawks U7 program is for players four, five and six years old. It is a structured, learn-to-play hockey program designed to introduce beginners to the game's basic skills, to have fun and to develop confidence.

U7 had a total of 110 players registered at the end of the 2021-22 season, and it was a fun season for all the little skaters. Players have been split into three groups for the past three seasons. Each player was given two ice times to be evaluated and placed in a group based on their skill level. Evaluations were conducted by non-parents.

Halifax Hawks Minor Hockey Association were able to participate in a number of jamborees this season, and the Hawks had strong results in all competitions, and the kids' made friends and great memories. The Hawks U7 group was able to participate in several Timbit's hockey games during the intermissions of Mooseheads games as well.

Each group was allocated two (50 minute) practice times per weekend between October and March. Practice times were:

- Three ice times between – 8:00 am and 11:00 am on Sat and Sun at the Civic Arena in Halifax

The practice times were led by a non-parent, mainly Liam Oxner, who did a great job. In addition, we had a total of 37 registered coaches:

- Central Group – 13 coaches
- Metro Group – 12 coaches
- Atlantic Group – 12 coaches

Note: The number of coaches differs from group to group because some teams had more parent volunteers than others.

As noted above there were 110 players in U7 in 2022-23 this is roughly the same number as last season so enrollment and new players starting their hockey journey with the Hawks remains strong. The future of the Hawks organization looks bright with this year's group of U7 players.

U9 report – Tyler Ravlo, Director

After 2 years of Covid disruptions it was nice to have a season that felt back to normal. 2022/23 had parents and families back in the stands and an uninterrupted game schedule.

I would like to thank all our volunteers because without you U9 hockey does not happen. Whether you were a coach, manager, treasurer, timekeeper or safety rep your time and commitment to these hockey players allows them to improve their skills, go to away tournaments and make lifelong friendships and memories. Thanks to all the parents and guardians who got the kids to the rink, sometimes early in the morning or across the province.

Our technical director, Tim Boyce, ran our practices which were a great combination of individual skill development and fun. It was also the first year of the Hawks First Assist program which had players from U13 and above on the ice helping with practices. Hopefully we will see this program continue to grow over the years.

I hope everyone enjoys some time away from the rink, and I look forward to seeing you back next year. And it's never too early to think about volunteering for next season!

Recreation Program Annual Reports

U11C report – Not available

U13C report – Troy DesBarres, Director

The Halifax Hawks had 3 U13C teams in the 2022/23 season. The teams were named the Black Hawks, Ice Hawks, and the Sky Hawks. Each team had 14 to 16 players. Each team had 1 goalie except for the Ice Hawks they had 2 goalies.

It was somewhat difficult to determine the number of teams ahead of time, we started thinking that there would be teams in total until the Halifax Hawks made the decision to have 2 competitive U13B teams. This depleted the U13C player pool as no players came down from the above levels. It was also difficult to find coaches and managers as well there were some late registrations accepted.

Both the Ice Hawks, and the Sky Hawks ended up in the bronze division in the second half of the season, while the Black Hawks ended up one division higher.

As director for the first time with the Halifax Hawks the beginning of the year was quite stressful not knowing what to do and learning as you went became not a great way to go. The managers and other support staff really rely on the director to know the entire process as to direct and guide them on what needs to be done. In my 2023/24 season I will document each step of the process to have a run book for future U13C directors.

Issues along the way:

- Having 2 U13B Competitive teams really had a drastic negative impact on the entire U13C Hockey program. I think that if such a decision is going to be made that this needs board approval because of the impact that such a decision has on the program. I can tell you that my vote will be NO after living through this already. Players and parents were very upset with this decision.
- Female players. Many parents, coaches and support staff are very unhappy with how Hockey Nova Scotia and subsequently the Hawks address the issue of female player exclusion. I think Hockey NS need to have a policy that states that all players must have a base layer of clothing that they dress down to. This simple policy along with the 2 deep rules would ensure that all female players are included. The policies as they stand today breed exclusion and this must change.
- New To Hockey: This year the U13C program invited many players new to hockey. As a result, the skate skill level was low, coaches felt that they needed to teach skating over hockey skills. In addition, the lines that were constructed were done in such a way that a line would consist of 1 strong skater / player and 2 not so strong skater / players. The Hawks did put on a power skating program in early 2023 that went over very well and in fact I have heard nothing but very positive feedback from both parents and players.

I know that the Hawks are actively recruiting new players and therefore the Hawks must have the support in place to facilitate things such as new to skating and new to goaltending. The Hawks have a great goalie program and our goalies are benefiting from that program. The Hawks should consider a power skating program run all yearlong and taught by a power skating coach.

U15C report – Heidi Grandy, Director

The Halifax Hawks had 3 U15C hockey teams in the 2022/23 season. They were the Ice Hawks, Red Hawks and White Hawks. Each team had 12 or 13 skaters and one goalie. Two shared practices were held each week. Thursday nights from 8:30 to 10, and Saturday mornings from 7 to 8. Practices were well attended, with about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the players attending Thursday nights and $\frac{1}{2}$ of the players attending Saturday mornings.

There were many games where teams had to call up or call over players from other teams. Unfortunately, around 40 players is a hard number to deal with. Two teams of 20 players would be too many per team, but 3 teams of 13 made it difficult to always have enough players for games.

The Red Hawks ended up in the silver division and the Ice Hawks and White Hawks ended up in the bronze division.

This year, there were a few issues involving Hawks behaviours towards players on other Hawks teams, coaches, and players on other teams. There were also incidents where players on other teams were verbally and physically abusive towards Hawks players, parents, and coaches.

The Hawks players really enjoyed helping with U7 and U9 practices, as well as the new to hockey practices.

U18C report – Frank Denis, Director

U18C had 4 teams participate in the MMHL this year with approximately 73 players. One team played in the gold division, two in silver, and one in Bronze. The league had 19 total teams and in the first round, each team played one another. I liked this format and blowouts were at a minimum.

Several players registered after teams were set and requested, they play on a certain team. This put our balancing work out of whack but did allow for more kids to play.

Suspensions were an issue as they were across most teams. It was mentioned that in GrayJay there is a way to see season stats per player including penalty minutes. I think this would be a useful stat to have access to check on who may be getting too many penalty minutes. In one instance a player received 32 minutes of penalties in a 30-minute game.

At the U18 level, it was noticed parent involvement and support starts to wane. Also, concerns were raised about game times. Specifically.

- Games being held on Friday or Saturday evenings.
- Games starting after 9:30 pm

There was also a concern about teams using dressing rooms on the same side of the rink at the Forum and therefore required to exit the ice as a group which thankfully did not lead to altercations but could have easily. It is suggested that the Hawks discuss with the Forum.

U23 report – Frank Denis, Director

There was one U23 team that represented the Hawks in the MMHL. The team consisted of 24 players. Suspensions and using ineligible players were challenges. A recommendation is that the U18 Competitive Director also be responsible for the U23 team.