

# GAME ON



## AWARD WINNERS

MANITOBA'S ELITE HOCKEY LEAGUES' 2023-24 ALL-STARS AND AWARD WINNERS CELEBRATED.

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JETS' DYLAN SAMBERG TEES OFF WITH THE PROS.

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In 2015, the Winnipeg Jets selected pure goal-scorer **Kyle Connor** in the first round (17th overall) of the NHL Entry Draft out of the Youngstown Phantoms of the USHL.

In 2012, the Jets used their fifth-round pick (130th overall) to select a 6-foot-4 goaltender out of UMass-Lowell. Since then, **Connor Hellebuyck** has become a two-time Vezina Trophy winner.

In 2011, the Jets selected big **Adam Lowry** in the third round (67th overall) of the NHL Draft out of the Swift

Current Broncos of the WHL. He is

now the team's captain.

In 2013, the Jets chose defenceman **Josh Morrissey** of the Prince Albert Raiders of the WHL, in the first round (13th overall) of the NHL Draft. He is now their leader on defence.

And also in 2011, in a bit of a surprise move, the Jets selected **Mark Scheifele** out of Dale Hawerchuk's Barrie Colts, with their first draft pick, No. 7 overall.

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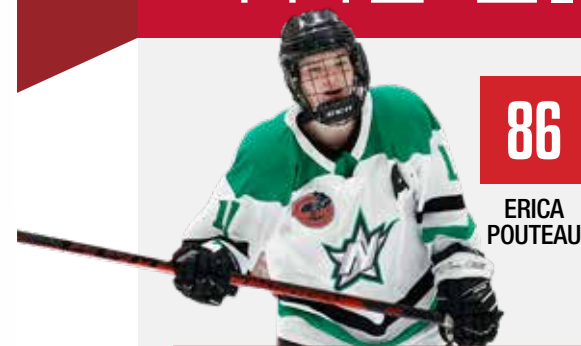


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SUMMER EDITION  
AUGUST 2024



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ERICA  
POUTEAU

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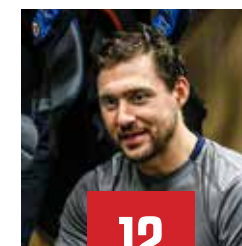
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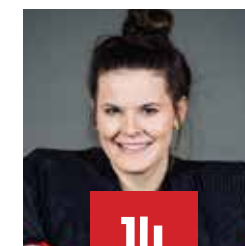
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GAME ON is Manitoba’s hockey community. This is where hockey fans will meet the stars of the game here in Manitoba and where our goal is to pay tribute to those who make hockey this province’s most beloved sport. Printed by Linda Averbach of Quantum Graphics.

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**DON'T BLINK**

**As country music legend Kenny Chesney famously put it, “Don’t blink, ‘cause just like that you’re six years old and you take a nap, and you wake up and you’re 25...”**

No, I don’t think I personally aged 19 years over the summer months, but time sure did fly on by. Between the rainy spring and cooler early summer weather, the ‘offseason’ has quickly come and gone. The leaves are starting to fall and the sun is setting much quicker. But with all that troubling information comes the long-awaited return to the rinks.

Sure, some of you haven’t taken a week off since the end of your respective 2023-24 seasons and playoffs. Not that I wouldn’t recommend year-round training, I would, however, push for a more balanced approach between the various sporting disciplines – especially during the traditional offseason. I’m not alone in this belief either, as many of today’s top players and coaches also push their athletes to

stay involved in sports not involving sticks or pucks during the summer months.

Winnipeg Jets defenceman Dylan Samberg – who is set to tee off in the *Manitoba Open* later this August – played four or five sports competitively as a youth, and still manages to hit the links as often as he can. Teammates Kyle Connor and Neal Pionk also grew up in family homes where hockey wasn’t everything, but rather one of many pastimes for the Connor and Pionk brothers.

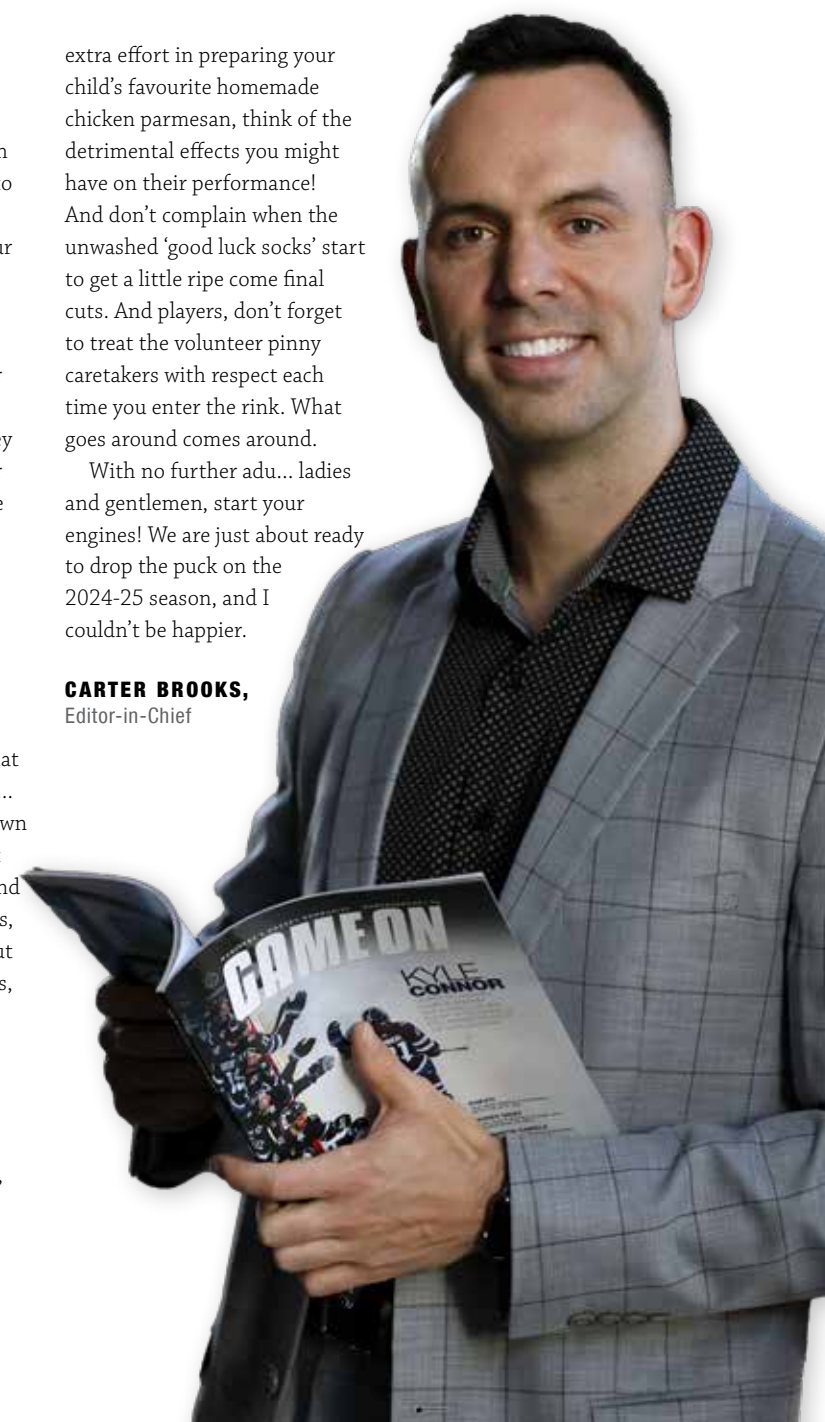
Whether your first time back on the ice came in June or July, or if it’s still yet to come this August or September, remember, your only competition for a roster spot is yourself. Much like that of golf, or baseball, or tennis... keep working towards your own goals and push to be the best version of you imaginable. And this isn’t just for the forwards, defenders and goaltenders out there either. Coaches, parents, cheerleaders and volunteers alike – you each have a job to do in order to make this tryout season a success.

Parents, next time you consider pulling out a frozen, pre-packaged meal before tryouts instead of taking the

extra effort in preparing your child’s favourite homemade chicken parmesan, think of the detrimental effects you might have on their performance! And don’t complain when the unwashed ‘good luck socks’ start to get a little ripe come final cuts. And players, don’t forget to treat the volunteer pinny caretakers with respect each time you enter the rink. What goes around comes around.

With no further adu... ladies and gentlemen, start your engines! We are just about ready to drop the puck on the 2024-25 season, and I couldn’t be happier.

**CARTER BROOKS,**  
Editor-in-Chief







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# NINO NIEDERREITER

62

FORWARD // SHOOTS LEFT // 6'2"  
BORN SEPT. 8, 1992 // CHUR, SUI  
2024-25 TEAM: WINNIPEG JETS

### 2023-24 SEASON STATS WINNIPEG JETS

77  
GAMES

18  
GOALS

34  
POINTS



He joined the Jets by way of a mid-season trade in 2023 and has been nothing but accommodating to Winnipeg's offence, its forward group, the dressing room and Manitoba's capital city as a whole. Volunteering with the Winnipeg Humane Society the past year gave fans an inside look into the veteran Swiss product's life outside of the rink.

Most recently, Niederreiter suited up for his home country at the 2024 IIHF World Championship this summer, where he scored three goals and seven points in 10 games, earning a silver medal with a second-place finish in the process. The 31-year-old also finished a +5, which could have easily been higher, but each of his three goals came on Swiss power plays.

The only Jets player to suit up in the World Championship, Niederreiter will look to bring his recent success to a new-look Winnipeg lineup for 2024-25 this fall, where he will begin the first season of a three-year, \$12 million extension he signed last December.



Photos by James Carey Laurier



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# KRISTEN CAMPBELL

50

GOALTENDER // SHOTS RIGHT // 5'9"  
 BORN NOVEMBER 30, 1997 // BRANDON, MAN  
 2024-25 TEAM: TORONTO PWHL

With hard work, determination and athletic ability, Brandon's Kristen Campbell has become one of Canada's finest goaltenders and this year, the national team backup took another step toward becoming the best in the game. The 26-year old graduate of the University of Wisconsin led Toronto of the PWHL to the post-season with a 16-6-0 record and was named the first ever PWHL Goaltender of the Year. "It's an honour to be named the first Goaltender of the Year in the PWHL," she told the league. "I couldn't do it without my teammates; everyone had my back all season long and it's just been such a special year."



Photos courtesy of the PWHL and Hockey Canada Images

2023-24  
 SEASON STATS  
 TORONTO (PWHL)

22  
 GAMES

1.99  
 GOALS AGAINST  
 AVERAGE

.927  
 SAVE PERCENTAGE



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# DALTON ANDREW

23

FORWARD // SHOOTS RIGHT // 6'5"

BORN AUGUST 5, 2003 // BRANDON, MAN

2024-25 TEAM: UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA FIGHTING HAWKS

**2023-24  
SEASON STATS**  
WINKLER FLYERS  
(MJHL)

**54**  
GAMES

**43**  
GOALS

**82**  
POINTS



After a tremendous season with the MJHL's Winkler Flyers, Brandon's Dalton Andrew committed to play NCAA Division I hockey at the University of North Dakota. "UND is one of the best organizations in all of college hockey," Andrew said. "For me, playing at North Dakota is a childhood dream come true." A three-year member of the Flyers, Andrew led the league in scoring during the 2023-24 season to earn the Mike Ridley Trophy as the MJHL's leader in points. Andrew was also recognized as an MJHL First Team All-Star and was a key member in the Flyers' run to winning the Turnbull Cup, co-leading the MJHL playoffs in scoring with four goals and 14 points in 15 games. He finished the season by being named the top forward at the Centennial Cup tournament.



Photo by James Carey/Lauder

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# DYLAN MCILRATH

42

DEFENCE // SHOOTS RIGHT // 6'5"  
BORN APRIL 20, 1992 // WINNIPEG, MAN  
2024-25 TEAM: WASHINGTON CAPITALS/HERSHEY BEARS

## 2023-24 SEASON STATS

HERSHEY BEARS (AHL)

58

GAMES

9

POINTS

100

PENALTY MINUTES



Dylan McIlrath doesn't score much, but he does have one quality that few players possess: he wins! This spring, wearing the captain's 'C', McIlrath led the Hershey Bears to another Calder Cup, emblematic of the championship of the American Hockey League. It was the third Calder Cup title in his 13-year pro hockey career. Although he only had nine points all season and just three in 20 games in the playoffs, that's not why he's around. As former Winnipeg Jets scout Bruce Southern said of McIlrath, "He will always have a job in hockey because he's a great teammate and he's a leader. He always has your back." The former Winnipeg Warriors star was a first round draft pick of the New York Rangers in 2010.



Photos courtesy of the Hershey Bears



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# GAVIN HILDEBRAND

37

GOALTENDER // CATCHES LEFT // 5'10"

BORN MAY 13, 2010 // MORDEN, MAN

2024-25 TEAM: PILOT MOUND U15 BUFFALOES

Photos courtesy Pilot Mound Hockey Academy



His nickname is Guy Smiley and according to Pilot Mound's senior goalie coach, Gordie Tumilson, he has all the makings of a future star: "He has attitude, size, goalie instincts, technique, intelligence and was even an honour student last season." From Morden, Gavin Hildebrand played all his minor hockey in his hometown before arriving in Pilot Mound for the 2023-24 season. His head coach Colin Fafara is excited about his prospects this season: "He's a great kid -- all hockey, all the time," said Fafara. "He's very serious about how he prepares each and every day. We had Gavin last year as a 2010, and being a 2010 in our U15 system is a big jump. You have to be a very good player. From the midway part of the year until the end of the season, he was our No. 1 goalie. We're expecting good things from Gav this season."

## 2023-24 SEASON STATS

PILOT MOUND U15 BUFFALOES (CSSL)

17

GAMES

5.50

GOALS AGAINST AVERAGE

.873

SAVE PERCENTAGE



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SCAN ME





# MAKENNA WILLIMENT

20

FORWARD // SHOOTS LEFT // 5'10"

BORN JULY 27, 2007 // WINNIPEG, MAN

2024-25 TEAM: BALMORAL HALL BLAZERS

**2023-24  
SEASON STATS**  
BALMORAL HALL  
BLAZERS (JWHL)

**58**  
GAMES

**12**  
GOALS

**29**  
POINTS



After a solid season during her Grade 11 year in 2023-24, Blazers power forward Makenna Williment has committed to Syracuse University. Her coach is convinced she'll do well. "She's such a strong power forward," said Sarah Zacharias. "She was taller than I am in Grade 10, and uses her size to the best of her ability. She reminds me of Dustin Byfuglien, how she protects the puck, stiff-arming people out of the way so they can't get the puck off her. Going into this Grade 12 year, we're expecting a lot out of her and she's going to play a big role for us. I'm really excited. She's going to do well at Syracuse. She chose a place where she's wanted."



Photos by Darryl Gershman and courtesy the Balmoral Hall Blazers



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# MARLEN EDWARDS

27

FORWARD // SHOOTS LEFT // 5'11"

BORN SEPTEMBER 19, 2006 // WINNIPEG, MAN

2024-25 TEAM: OCN BLIZZARD

**2023-24  
SEASON STATS**  
OCN BLIZZARD  
(MJHL)

**55**  
GAMES

**12**  
GOALS

**35**  
POINTS



In his first season in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League, Edwards was named to the All-Rookie team after helping the OCN Blizzard reach the playoffs and go deep into the second round. Named the top forward at the 2023 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships, the 17-year-old from Lake Manitoba First Nation has won one gold (2023) and one bronze medal (2024) in two years as part of Team Manitoba at the NAHC. "He had a great tournament this year," said Team Manitoba manager Kevin Monkman. "He's just turning 18 this year and I think he has a great future ahead."



Photos by James Carey Lauder



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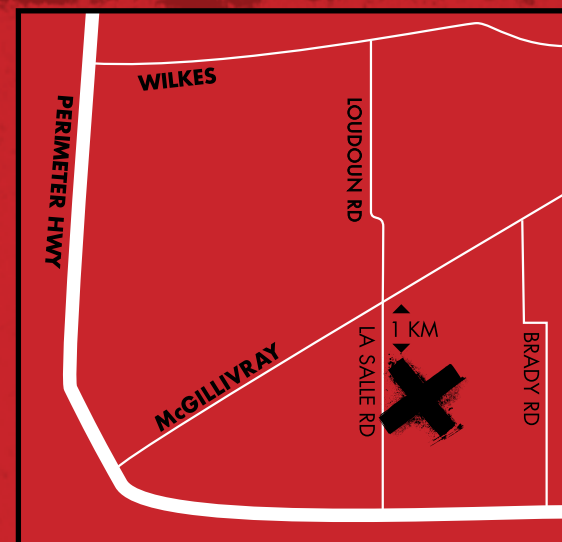
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## YOGA TO LENGTHEN MUSCLES AND IMPROVE RESILIENCY

If you play a sport, your body is a machine; it is the tool that allows you to perform your work. In the same ways a race car requires maintenance, and a chef sharpens his knives, your body needs to be tuned in order to function optimally – both on and off the ice.

A sport-specific yoga practice should focus on strengthening and lengthening not only the muscles, but the tissues as well. Yes, you can actually improve the resiliency of the tissues (think fascia, tendons, ligaments) in the body. So how can we do this?

### STRETCH IT OUT

Let's talk static stretching and flexibility first. Static

stretching sometimes gets a bad rap, and while I don't advocate for long passive stretching sessions pre-performance, I also don't want to "throw the baby out with the bathwater", so to speak. Static stretching is great for reducing muscle soreness and improving recovery. It is also superior to other types of stretching when it comes to making gains in range of motion, but to achieve the full benefit of the practice you'll need more than just stretching.

### TRAINING THE TISSUES

In addition to stretching, a complete training regime should focus on strengthening and lengthening not only

the muscles, but the tissues as well. You may recall from my last article that fascia is the body-wide tensional network or "saran wrap" that encases the entire body. Not only does it absorb and distribute force in the body, it stores elastic energy, making it possible to move with minimal muscular effort (like a spring!). Ounce for ounce it is stronger than steel and it is trainable! Yes, you can train your fascia to meet the demands of your sport.

### SO, WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Did you know that most muscular injuries are probably also connective tissue injuries? (Wilke et al. 2019).

It's true. You can be the most skilled player in the league, but if you can't stay healthy it won't do you any good. So, what can we do to improve the resiliency of the connective tissue? Plenty!

Gentle stretching, dynamic movement, and myofascial release (think ball rolling) will keep the tissues hydrated and pliable. Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF) - the fancy term for a style of stretching that involves contracting and then relaxing the muscles (think pressing down on your inner thighs while you sit in a "butterfly" stretch), active range of motion work – slowly moving a joint through its full range of motion, and eccentric exercises – strengthening the muscles while they're in a lengthened position, will also serve to strengthen the tissues and protect the joint. All types of stretching and compression stimulate production of collagen which stores elastic energy and is a key contributor to resilient fascia. Need I say more?

I could go on and on, but all of this is to say that a sport-specific yoga practice can lengthen muscles, strengthen tissues, and reduce injury, giving you the edge over the competition.



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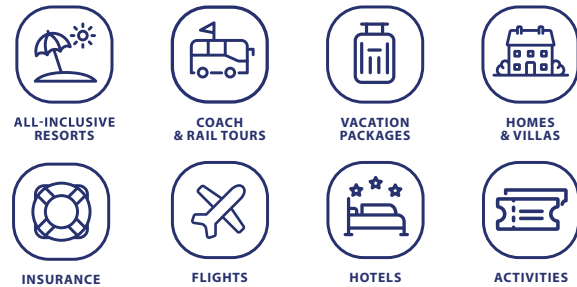


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BY CARTER BROOKS  
Photos by James Carey Lauder  
and Scott Stroh



# CONNOR VEZINA-BUYCK

## ANOTHER TROPHY FOR THE MANTLE

**O**n a late-June evening from the 2024 NHL Award at Fontainebleau Las Vegas, Winnipeg Jets all-star goaltender Connor Hellebuyck calmly strode to the stage where he was presented with his second-career Vezina Trophy, becoming just the second goaltender to earn the award twice since 1981.

"Growing up, my whole goal was to be the best in the world," Hellebuyck said in his media availability after the show. "This is a steppingstone for it, and that's not something that's just given or awarded. It's earned every single day. So, for me, it feels

like I'm doing something right."

Given annually to the goaltender adjudged to be the best at his position, the 31-year-old Hellebuyck beat out finalists Thatcher Demko (Vancouver) and Sergei Bobrovsky (Florida). And he did so in grand fashion.

The final tabulation indicated that Hellebuyck's stellar campaign certainly was not lost on many voters - which just so happen to be the league's 32 general managers. He earned an incredible 31 of 32 first-place votes overall, completely tearing up his competition.

"It really hasn't sunk in yet," the Michigan product said. "If I have to



# 2023-24 VEZINA TROPHY VOTING

## POINTS (1ST-2ND-3RD)

1. **Connor Hellebuyck**, WPG 158 (31-1-0)
2. **Thatcher Demko**, VAN 70 (0-20-10)
3. **Sergei Bobrovsky**, FLA 40 (1-8-11)
4. **Igor Shesterkin**, NYR 7 (0-1-4)
5. **Juuse Saros**, NSH 5 (0-1-2)
6. **Linus Ullmark**, BOS 3 (0-1-0)
7. **Jeremy Swayman**, BOS 3 (0-0-3)
8. **Charlie Lindgren**, WSH 1 (0-0-1)  
**Ilya Sorokin**, NYI 1 (0-0-1)

5-3-1 points allocation (1st-2nd-3rd)



“...FOR ME, IT FEELS LIKE I'M DOING SOMETHING RIGHT”

be fully honest, it's kind of a steppingstone for what I want to be: the best in the world. So, it was kind of showing me I'm doing alright. I've had a lot of people around me that have been helping me along the way, so I know it feels good for them that they're doing right with me as well, and I look forward to celebrating with all those people.”

Going 37-19-4 on the season with a sensational 2.39 goals against average, a .921 save percentage and five shutouts, Hellebuyck was already crowned as the league's Jennings Trophy winner, as the goaltender of record on the team allowing the fewest goals against in the season.

“This is an individual award, but it's not won individually,” Hellebuyck said, describing the collective effort by his group to play a well-rounded defensive game this past season.

He gave up three or fewer goals-against in 50 of his 60 games played, while posting two streaks of 10 games with two or fewer goals-against.

For the now nine-year pro, it was his fourth Vezina

Trophy nomination, second-consecutive nomination and second career win.

Hellebuyck finished second in voting in 2017-18 and third in 2022-23. He is just the 23rd goaltender in NHL history to have his name on the award multiple times.

Diving into his analytics, Hellebuyck pulled ahead mightily with his reactionary and desperation stops, turning aside 39 goals saved above expected (GSAX), putting him a full 10 points ahead of the second-place backstop.

His Jets went on to post 110 points and finish second in the Central Division, before falling flat to the Colorado Avalanche in the first round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

“There's only one thing left on my mind, and that's the Stanley Cup,” Hellebuyck said when asked about the sting of coming up short in the postseason. “So, anything I can do to get there, I'm going to start doing.”

Since being selected by the Jets 130th overall in the fifth round of the 2012 NHL Draft, Hellebuyck has gone on to play 505 regular season games for Winnipeg, winning


275 contests while posting a .917 save percentage, a 2.63 goals against average and 37 shutouts. He has played the most games and made the most saves of any NHL goaltender since he joined the team for the 2015-16 season. Just Tampa Bay's Andrei Vasilevskiy has more wins over that period of time. Veteran Marc-Andre Fleury is the only backstop with as many shutouts.

“I think we made really big strides this year,” Hellebuyck said. “We changed our identity a little bit and we brought a solid, winning philosophy to Winnipeg, and I think our fans and our team bought in. And just that all-around buy-in, I'm pretty proud of that.”

Not the only Jets player to have his name appear on the ballots, Hellebuyck was joined by teammates Josh Morrissey (seventh in Norris Trophy voting) and Adam Lowry (seventh in Selke Trophy voting), GM Kevin Cheveldayoff (seventh in GM of the Year voting) and former coach Rick Bowness (third in Jack Adams voting) while finishing sixth in Hart Trophy voting himself.







# THE MAN OF THE SUMMER

GM KEVIN CHEVELDAYOFF



BY CARTER BROOKS

Photos courtesy of Dylan Samberg, James Carey Lauder and Scott Stroh

## WINNIPEG JETS SUMMER WRAP-UP

**L**ife in the driver's seat for an NHL general manager usually flies by at F1 pace, however, unbeknownst to some, it is during the summer months where most of the business actually takes place. Sure, all 82 games are played during the season, and team management is able to take in its work in the form of on-ice production, or in some cases, lack thereof. But again, most of the business pertaining to drafts, contracts, signings and negotiations occur during the offseason.

With most contracts in hockey running from July 1 through June 30, the midway point of the calendar year tends to be the craziest for transactions. This year's free agent signing period was no different, as a record \$1.2 billion was spent by NHL clubs on the first day alone, marking the first 24-hour period in league history to which \$1 billion was shelled out in player spending.

No, Winnipeg Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff did not account for much of that massive figure, but he did attend to some important business over the summer months. With a number of contracts from the

Jets' 2023-24 roster expiring, Chevy's biggest concern was bringing back his restricted free agents. And for the most part, he got the job done, with some time to spare.

But even before his offseason spending began, other league orders of business took place – many of which involved members of the team.

### A NEW BOSS MAN

In late-May, the Jets announced the conclusion of their coaching search, naming Scott Arniel as head coach. Re-joining Winnipeg as associate coach for the 2022-23 season, the 61-year-old stepped up to the plate when called upon, filling in with a strong 15-7-3 record over 25 games as acting head coach while filling in for Rick Bowness the past two seasons.

After landing the job, Arniel's first task was to bring in his staff for the coming season. In speaking with *Game On*, Arniel said he participated in "countless" interviews and zeroed in on Dean Chynoweth and Davis Payne. The two will now join Marty Johnson, Wade Flaherty and Matt Prefontaine under Arniel's wing as assistants.



**CONNOR HELLEBUYCK WON HIS SECOND VEZINA TROPHY**



**ONE BIG WINNER**

Connor Hellebuyck earned the NHL's Vezina Trophy as the league's top goaltender at the 2024 NHL Awards in Vegas in late-June. Surrounded by a strong defence corps, Hellebuyck put up a sensational 2023-24 season, as highlighted by his staggering Goals Saved Above Expected (GSAe) statistic. He also took home the Jennings Trophy for being the goaltender of record on the team giving up the fewest goals-against. Hellebuyck, who remains focused on the same narrative since Day 1, is adamant his job will not be done until he earns a taste from the Stanley Cup. Josh Morrissey, Adam Lowry and Rick Bowness each received votes for other trophies, as unveiled at the NHL Awards.

**JETS DRAFT RECAP**

Just two days after the NHL Awards, Winnipeg's front office staff made four selections at the 2024 NHL Draft – with all four picks coming on Day 2 of the weekend event, also held in Vegas. The Jets selected defenceman Alfons Freij 37th overall out of Sweden near the start of the second

round. They didn't have another pick until No. 109 overall, where Winnipeg chose Kevin He from the OHL. He became the highest selected China-born player all-time. From there, the Jets picked forward Markus Loponen 155th overall out of Finland, before wrapping things up with another forward, Kieron Walton, at No. 187, also out of the OHL.

**DRAFT AND DEVELOP**

All four of the players selected by Winnipeg at the 2024 NHL Draft attended the Jets' development camp a few days later, where they were joined by 31 other draft picks and listed prospects of the team for a week of on/off-ice training. Star prospects Brad Lambert, Colby Barlow, Chaz Lucius and Thomas Milic were all in attendance, while local invitees Gavin Hodnett, Nathan Brown, Reid Dyck and Luke Mistelbacher also had the chance to join in on the action.

**DYLAN AND DESTINY SAMBERG CELEBRATING THEIR WEDDING IN JULY.**



**FREE AGENT FRENZY**

Sorting out numbers was the name of the game for Cheveldayoff this offseason. With a host of players concluding contracts on June 30, the Jets' GM was forced to make some difficult decisions in terms of which players to retain, which to cut bait with and which to bring in from the open market. Parting ways were Sean Monahan, Tyler Toffoli, Brenden Dillon and Nate Schmidt, while Dylan DeMelo re-upped to the tune of four years and \$19.6 million. Winnipeg also brought back Eric Comrie – who will battle fellow free agent signee Kaapo Kahkonen for the backup role – as well as 2024 trade deadline acquisition Colin Miller on the back-end. The Jets traded for and signed defencemen Dylan Coghlan and Haydn Fleury, who will compete for the final spots on the blueline. While Ville Heinola also signed a new contract in hopes of finding steady work as an everyday defenceman for Winnipeg this coming season. Logan Stanley and David Gustafsson also signed two-year extensions on the same date in early-July.

**SCHEDULE UNVEILED**

The 2024-25 NHL schedule was released in July, and will see the Jets open the year from Rogers Place in Edmonton on October 9 in a test with Connor McDavid and the Oilers. Winnipeg will then head to Canada Life Centre on October 11 for its home opener against Connor Bedard and the Chicago Blackhawks. The Jets will host an eight-game homestand from January 2-18, before the league takes a two-week break from February 8-21 for the Four Nations Cup. The newly-relocated Utah hockey club will visit Winnipeg two times this season.

**SUMMER LOVIN'**

In sticking with the off-ice news trend, two members of the Jets also celebrated major life events this summer, as 27-year-old forward Kyle Connor (Ally Petack) and 25-year-old defenceman Dylan Samberg (Destiny Schmitz) each joined their life partners at the altar in separate July weddings.



**JETS SUMMER ADDITIONS/SUBTRACTIONS**

**IN**

- G - ERIC COMRIE
- G - KAAPO KAHKONEN
- D - HAYDN FLEURY
- D - DYLAN COGHLAN
- F - JARET ANDERSON-DOLAN
- F - MASON SHAW

**OUT**

- G - LAURENT BROSSOIT
- G - COLLIN DELIA
- G - OSKARI SALMINEN
- D - BRENDEN DILLON
- D - NATE SCHMIDT
- D - KYLE CAPOBIANCO
- F - SEAN MONAHAN
- F - TYLER TOFFOLI

**RE-SIGNED**

- D - DYLAN DEMELO
- D - COLIN MILLER
- D - LOGAN STANLEY
- D - VILLE HEINOLA
- D - SIMON LUNDMARK
- F - DAVID GUSTAFSSON





**AS TOLD TO CARTER BROOKS**

Photos by Jonathan Kozub, Rusty Barton, Scott Stroh and James Carey Lauder

# BACK AT THE HELM

If Scott Arniel isn't a household name in your place of residence, you likely weren't around to take in the Winnipeg Jets of the 1980s, didn't watch the Manitoba Moose of the mid-2000s, and missed significant chunks of the past Jets season. Because, as of May 24, the 61-year-old became the ninth head coach in franchise history, and fourth since the club relocated from Atlanta.

And let's face it, Arniel was the perfect choice.

A former second round pick of the Jets (taken just 21 selections after Winnipeg plucked the late Dale Hawerchuk first overall that same year) Arniel went on to skate with 'Ducky' and the Jets for the next five seasons, before returning for one more year in 1990-91 for his final full year in the NHL. Ending up in the minors, the Kingston, ON, product once again found his way back to Manitoba – this time with the Moose of the IHL, where he concluded his playing career with three strong seasons as a productive winger, never failing to crack at least 50 points.

Upon retirement in 1999, Arniel began coaching as an assistant with the Moose for two years. He made the leap to the NHL as an assistant with the Buffalo Sabres, before returning to Manitoba in 2006 as head

coach of the Moose – a title he held for four years. Promoted to head coach of the Columbus Blue Jackets in 2010, Arniel lasted just a season-and-a-half (123 games) before finding himself out of work in 2012.

Since that point, it's been a steady diet of hard work and determination as he grinded his way to an opportunity to once again take the reins atop an NHL bench. Re-joining the Jets for the 2022-23 season as an associate on Rick Bowness' staff, Arniel was called into action at two points last season when Bowness had to step away from the club for health and family matters. During his time as bench boss, Arniel's Jets went 15-7-3 in 25 games with roughly a 2:1 win/losses ratio – surely enough for a chance at the head coaching role.

With Bowness officially announcing his retirement following Winnipeg' postseason collapse, Arniel successfully made his case in front of Jets management, teeing up the next three years as head coach for a guy who now considers himself an "honourary Winnipegger".

Arniel sat down with *Game On* editor-in-chief Carter Brooks and chatted all about his many years spent in 'Winterpeg', his pastimes, lessons learned on the bench and memories of Jets fans of old for the August issue.

## INTERVIEW



### SCOTT ARNIEL

HEIGHT / 6'1"

WEIGHT / 200 POUNDS

AGE / 61 YEARS OLD

BORN / SEPT. 17, 1962

BIRTHPLACE / KINGSTON, ONTARIO

POSITION / FORWARD

SHOOTS / LEFT

DRAFTED / 2ND ROUND, 22ND OVERALL, 1981 NHL DRAFT





**WHAT DOES A TYPICAL GAME-DAY ROUTINE LOOK LIKE FOR HEAD COACH SCOTT ARNIE?**

"I like to get the rink early. Then I'd check in with the coaches, kind of going over business from the previous day. It's then putting the lineup together for the game that evening, talking that over, getting our video ready for the three different meetings. Then it's those meetings: power play, penalty kill, and then five-on-five meeting, as organized in the morning skate. I'd then come and talk to your guys in the media for a few minutes. Then we'd have our team meal here at the rink. The players, coaches and staff all eat here. So, then I'd go and head home for a couple hours, where I really won't do a whole heck of a lot. Then I'd come back here for 3:30 or 3:45, talk with the players and make sure they're all ready to go. And then, obviously, it's game time."

**HOW DOES IT FEEL HAVING THE FULL TRUST OF GM KEVIN CHEVELDAYOFF, KNOWING THE TEAM IS NOW FULLY IN YOUR HANDS?**

"When you're first offered the job, it's the thrill of, 'wow, it's finally happening' and, for me, it was getting a second opportunity as a head coach. It's a thrill and some serious excitement, but then shortly after it was, 'okay, what do I have to do first?' It was reaching out to all my family, my kids, my mom, my brothers and sisters, just letting everybody know it happened. Obviously, they were all anticipating and hoping to hear this news, so to let them all know, that was really special. Then, the press conference, and of course, that was a big deal, especially here in Winnipeg. I pretty much had a list started on things I knew that I was going to have to do leading up to development camp. So, I went from the excitement of being selected as head coach, to all of a sudden going through this long laundry list of things that needed to be done by early-July. So, there you have it. Daunting in some ways, but an absolute thrill, excitement, and just so much joy to be having this opportunity."



**AND HOW SPECIAL WAS IT TO HAVE ALL OF THIS HAPPEN FOR YOU BACK IN WINNIPEG?**

"It is an absolute honour; it's a huge honour for me. There are 32 jobs in this league. 32 of these jobs in the world, actually. But for me to come back here where it all started, to get the role here with Winnipeg is truly an honour and a thrill. The last couple years have been great being back. I mean, I've went and gained experience in other cities with other teams. But if you told me I could pick a team, and all 32 teams were available, to be honest – and this isn't a word of a lie – I would take the Winnipeg Jets. Like I said, I started here in 1981. So to consider all the people along the way, friends that I've met, acquaintances, the fan base of Manitoba,

of Winnipeg... there would be no better place to win than here. And that's exactly what I'm hoping for."

**I KNOW YOU'RE FROM ONTARIO, BUT WOULD YOU CALL YOURSELF A WINNIPEGGER NOW? OR MAYBE AN HONOURARY WINNIPEGGER?**

"I've been here since '81, so I mean, I've been a Winnipegger longer than quite a few. Everybody back in Kingston still likes to remind me where I'm from. But at the end of the day, I've been here off and on since '81. My wife is from here. My kids were pretty much raised here, so I would say we've got a lot of that tough Winnipeg blood in us."

**WHEN YOU THINK OF WINNIPEG AND JETS FANS, WHAT STANDS OUT? WHAT COMES TO MIND THROUGH YOUR EXPERIENCES OVER THE PAST 40-SOME-ODD YEARS?**

"I know everybody makes a big deal of the whiteout. Obviously, it is a major thing, and again this year you've got headlines all over North America. There's talk shows down in the United States talking about it. I love that. I'd like to think I was a part of that at the very beginning, way back when we were playing the Calgary Flames when it kind of started itself – maybe ignited itself, I should say.

But for me, the biggest thing is the growth. I know we lost it for a few years there. But now I'm on the road, maybe down in Tampa Bay or Arizona or even New York City, and it's amazing

the Jets fans that are out there that I run into or maybe recognize me. It gives us a chance to say hello. They're just true fans and that really shows their passion."

**IS THAT RIGHT – SO YOU'RE RUNNING INTO THESE JETS FANS QUITE OFTEN WHEN YOU TRAVEL WITH THE TEAM?**

"I mean, I know a ton of people who actually organize their winter holidays around where the Jets are going to be. It has obviously grown tenfold over the past few years, but it's awesome to see the support. I can't believe the amount of fans that show up. And these guys are clearly from Winnipeg, too. They plan their winters around the trip, so that's always nice. The other thing too is when I go to my local grocery store, people are always coming up to me to chat. I have a place at Lake of the Woods. I'm pulled over at the corner store grabbing some gas, and a guy comes up and says he's from five hours away, but he and his dad have season tickets. And he's just standing there and telling me how they try to make almost every game. It's just so awesome to hear those stories. They come from all stretches of Manitoba, from border to border, all the way down to the U.S. border and even from up north. They drive in all the time to see the games; it's just so awesome to hear it in person. The farmers you talk to that drive in a couple hours each game. No big deal from them, right? It just gives you more reason to win it for them, for all those fans."

**TELL ME ABOUT THE LAST COUPLE YEARS UNDER BONES. SOME OF THE MEMORIES – A LIFETIME OF EXPERIENCE AND GUIDANCE, I AM SURE.**

I have been so very fortunate over my coaching career to have learned from Randy Carlyle, Alain Vigneault, Lindy Ruff, Peter LaViolette... and now most recently Bones. And for us, we go even further back as teammates.

If you don't learn from these people, then you've probably got your mouth open more than your ears. Bones has been such a great mentor for me over the years. We have kind of had similar routes, where he was a coach a long time ago and then he obviously was an assistant for a long, long stretch. And then got a second chance. His knowledge of the game, him being around so long and in so many different circumstances, and just how he handles his day-to-day. You learn so much from watching a guy like that."

**WHAT'S THE BIGGEST LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED FROM RICK OVER THE LAST TWO SEASONS? IS THERE JUST ONE?**

"No, there isn't just one. But the biggest thing, if you meet Rick Bowness, is just how personable he is. Bones is also so willing to talk to anybody, and his people skills are second to none. It's such a treat to be around and I think that's something that kind of washes off on you. Just how he goes about his day-to-day business, you want to try to emulate some of those things. You obviously have to be your own



guy, but there's a lot of things that Rick – like most other coaches – whether it's the systems, in-game situations, or how your work with your personnel, handle your coaching staff, the people in your office... he just does so well. Bones has been a great mentor for me over the years, and for that, I'll be forever thankful."

**I'D LOVE TO HEAR A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE REST OF THE COACHING STAFF AND YOUR NEW HIRES IN DAVIS PAYNE AND DEAN CHYNOWETH.**

"I wanted to make sure that I was real thorough in this search process, and I'd like to think I was. At the end of the day, the hardest part was that I was competing against seven other teams that were looking for coaches. So, that was why I had to get going on it right away. I'm really

excited about these two guys. Both Davis and Dean, they've been in the game a long time at all different levels. They've both been head coaches and assistant coaches. They've done a lot of things over their careers: they've won, they've had success, they've been developers, they've worked with young players and they've worked with veteran players to create great relationships."

**WHAT GAVE YOU SUCH CONFIDENCE IN THESE TWO?**

"Quite honestly, I have heard nothing but awesome things about each guy. Whether it came from players that played for them or coaches that worked with them. Management did a lot of digging on not just those guys, but everybody. I got some great things back on those two and it really helped me feel confident that I was making the right choices. I am really happy and excited that they chose Winnipeg as well, because they, too, could have gone somewhere else. I talked to a ton of guys and got a lot of different opinions, a lot of different ideas and a lot of different thoughts from some candidates. You know, some of the guys talked about our team and their thoughts of some of our players – and they're guys that are in the league or have been in the league – so it was a really interesting experience. It was great to talk to those guys and really get a good feel for people."





# 10 QUESTIONS WITH SCOTT ARNIEL



**DRESSY OR CASUAL?**  
Casual. Definitely casual.

**BEER OR LIQUOR?**  
Beer.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MUSIC GENRE?**  
Classic rock.

**IS THERE A FAVOURITE GETAWAY YOU HAVE? MAYBE SOMEWHERE YOU LIKE TO GO EITHER ALONE OR WITH YOUR FAMILY?**  
We have a place out in Lake of the Woods. It is just beautiful there.

**WHAT TELEVISION SHOW CURRENTLY HAS YOUR ATTENTION?**  
We actually just started watching this one actually: Mayor of Kingstown.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY PETS OR ANIMALS LIVING WITH YOU?**  
Nope. Nothing like that.

**DID YOU HAVE ANY HOCKEY POSTERS ON YOUR WALL AS A KID?**  
Sure did. It was Bobby Orr.

**SO, DID YOU LIKE THE BRUINS OR JUST BOBBY?**  
Both. My older brother loved the Bruins, so it just came naturally.

**DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE DISH OR MEAL FOR DINNER?**  
I've got a few. I like steak, but also chicken. Oh, and perogies too. Maybe not all at once though.

**ARE YOU A BIG NAP GUY?**  
I'm a 15-minute nap guy and it drives my wife nuts. I can fall asleep for 15 minutes and it felt like I slept for six hours.



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BY SCOTT TAYLOR  
Photos by James Carey Lauder

# THE HOCKEY DAD

## GANNI MAAN HAS A PASSION FOR HOCKEY.

He grew up playing road hockey on the streets of the Maples and has a deep affection for “his” Winnipeg Jets.

He also loves nothing more than introducing people in his South Asian community in Manitoba to the game he loves. He is, as they say, a true believer in the adage that hockey is for all.

In fact, he’s so committed to spreading the word about his favourite game, that he’s become an ambassador for the sport, working with the Jets as a fan advisor and promoting the benefits of the First Shift program.

“I got involved with First Shift in the summer of 2023,” he explained. “I’m a member of the Jets advisory council for True North and from that, my role evolved into becoming an ambassador for the South

Asian community with helping to organize the Jets South Asian Heritage Nights (SAHN) and running point on providing all the cultural intelligence that makes the community so wonderful.

“In addition to SAHN, I’m thrilled to be part of growing the game, that’s the area I’m most passionate about – getting hockey into Canada’s diverse communities. My love affair with hockey has always been strong, it was an easy decision for me to be involved with growing the game at the grassroots level.”

When he’s not at the rink, Maan is in the wealth-management business. He owns a wealth-management firm that his dad started 40 years ago. Ganni himself has been in wealth management for 20 years, servicing clients all across Canada. He just recently completed his MBA and while that keeps him busy, he’ll be the first admit that being a hockey dad and spending time at the rink with his kids is where he’d rather be.

“I was like every kid from the Maples playing street hockey every night,” he explained. “I didn’t have access to the game myself. Both of my parents immigrated here to Winnipeg, and organized sports programs weren’t on the radar so we grew up playing wherever we could



RONAN (LEFT) AND KEGAN MAAN

find a street and grabbed our sticks, a couple of nets and spent all our time playing until the streetlights came on. So, I started like so many Canadian kids do, playing street hockey.

It was Saturday night Hockey Night in Canada and the Jets that spurred his love of the game.

“I remember listening to Jets games on the radio in the 80s and checking stats in the paper the next day. Hockey has always been something I’ve gravitated to, it’s part of who I am. It’s something I want everyone

else to share — that joy and love of the game. I’ve said this so many times, there is nothing more Canadian than hockey and nothing brings Canadians together like hockey.

He passed his hockey passion onto his two boys, Kegan, 11, and Ronan, 13 who have been playing since they were four years old, starting in TimBits and now playing for the Seven Oaks Raiders.

“I get to live the game on the ice through them. Being a hockey dad, a hockey parent, is one of the best things ever.

Being at practice or games, having a coffee and chatting with parents about the game is the best. To be part of this hockey community that I see my boys growing into, I’m very proud of that.”

Because so many people in his community know Ganni as “the hockey guy,” he was eventually approached by True North to help assist in growing the game by becoming an “ambassador,” not only for South Asian Heritage Night, but also to organize and coordinate First Shift along with two other hockey lovers, Ron

Cantiveros and Allan Chan.

“The three of us have been working to create more awareness and create more access points for youth and families of diverse communities to start enjoying the game and fall in love with it the same way we did growing up,” Maan said.

“It is meaningful to the South Asian community that they have an idea of how to gain access. It’s so difficult for new Canadians or people from different backgrounds to get involved. The things we take for granted – joining a community





GANNI, RONAN AND KEGAN MAAN

centre, knowing how to register, understanding how equipment works, understanding ice times – all those things are completely new to people coming to Canada.”

Following a spring pilot, Winnipeg’s first official First Shift program started in the fall of 2023 and it was an immediate success. Maan works closely with David Sattler, the general manager of True North Sports + Entertainment’s multiplex hockey for all centre, who has taken a lead on diversifying the game.

“We have lots of plans for the fall both in terms of First Shift as well as our new Second Shift program to help players transition to the minor system once they’ve completed First Shift,” explained Sattler.

“Organizationally, hockey for all centre will run in partnership with different community groups, nine First Shift programs during the 2024-25 year, including two new programs in Manitoba -- Para First Shift and a First Shift program geared to participants between the age of 11-15 rather than 5-10. We are very excited to continue to see high demand and growth in these communities. Additionally, two of the nine programs are girls only programs.”

The Second Shift program will be available as a follow-up at Seven Oaks in both December/January and again in the spring.

“In addition to programs being hosted through True North Sports + Entertainment, the South Winnipeg Hockey Association,

River East Minor Hockey Association, Assiniboine Park Hockey Association, Fort Garry North Hockey Association, Seven Oaks Minor Hockey Association and Transcona Minor Hockey Association will each host their own Winnipeg Jets First Shift program this upcoming season. We’ve also worked with Hockey Brandon to host a program this November,” Sattler said.

For people like Sattler and Maan, progressing First Shift is an important step in the growth of the game – meeting Canada’s changing demographics head on.

“We wanted to create a warm and inviting environment for everyone to come and enjoy the game and we have succeeded already,” Maan said. “The program has been thriving in just its first year. Our first two sessions have been full and there is more demand now than we first started. We are overjoyed with the response from the community,” he said noting 160 kids have been able to participate in 2023.

“With that success, we’ve asked for the program to

double in size during the 2024-25 season. In the fall, we’re looking to welcome 120 boys and girls to participate in the program and another 120 in the winter session. Our goal in the next five years is to increase that number to 500 per session – 1,000 new kids joining hockey that had never had a chance to play or know that hockey was a possibility.”

As Maan points out, across Canada, we’re seeing the game become representative of the more diverse country that we have. The change, and this the introduction of Canada’s favourite sport, is not just happening here in Manitoba, but right across the country. More players, players who are representative of their communities, are embracing their duality and heritage and yet carving out a place for themselves in Canada’s game.

And they are also becoming better players.

“Anything is possible,” Maan said. “The strongest message we can send to young kids is when you see success on the ice, it’s all based on merit. People are



PRABH BHATHAL



GANNI MAAN (FRONT) CAPTAIN

earning it and when kids see players that look like them put in the hard work into the game, they believe with the right opportunities they too can earn it as well. It’s another gift the game gives us – hard work, determination, and that drive to want to be better.

Mann references Manitoba’s Prabh Bhathal, who was selected by the Brandon Wheat Kings this year. “The younger kids now have role models. Prabh is only 15 and we’ve seen his success and how his work ethic has helped him reach new heights. He’s a fantastic example of the principles we are trying to teach and is following in the footsteps of players who have reached the NHL. There are now many players from diverse backgrounds who are making a name for themselves in the game; it’s only a matter of

**“ JOINING A HOCKEY TEAM IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY THAT CREATES LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS AND BUILDS CHARACTER ”**

time before the next NHL superstar will be from one of these diverse communities.”

That’s true, but from a personal standpoint, Maan just wants the people of his community to fall in love with hockey just like he did.

“I want every kid and parent to experience the game,” he said. “Joining a hockey team is a great opportunity that creates lifelong friendships and builds character. My goal with First Shift is to encourage everyone to take that first step, we are committed to positive change that we hope produces the same love for the game that we have.”



KEGAN AT LEARN TO SKATE





BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by James Carey Lauder and courtesy the Cantiveros Family

# THE LEARNING CURVE

The demographics are changing. And, in the future, the change will be profound.

According to David Sattler, the general manager of Winnipeg's hockey for all centre, the sport of hockey needs to change with the times or it might be left behind.

"As the demographics of our province change, we are seeing more and more of our population come from backgrounds where hockey is not a familiar sport," said Sattler, noting the recent and projected growth of the Filipino, South Asian and Asian communities, in particular, in Manitoba, along with a growing Indigenous population.

"Hockey can be an intimidating sport to get started in and there is a need to be more intentional in growing interest for the game and boosting registration across

all community areas – and especially among these new and growing demographics."

Since 2010, hockey registrations in Canada have declined by 35 percent, and the sport has yet to recover to pre-pandemic numbers.

Introducing new communities to hockey isn't just good for the game, it helps to build connections and commonality.

"Being from Winnipeg, hockey is in our DNA. It's what connects us and brings our community together at community centres, arenas, outdoor rinks and at Canada Life Centre cheering on the Winnipeg Jets."

Sattler and his hockey for all centre team have committed to doing their part to curb the decline with a grow the game strategy they hope will prevent the sport from facing significant challenges for the next generation – hurdles like

FIRST SHIFT PLAYERS AT SEVEN OAKS ARENA DURING THE FALL 2023 BATCH WITH RON CANTIVEROS, FILIPINO HERITAGE NIGHT COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR AND WINNIPEG JETS MASCOT MICK E. MOOSE.







FIRST SHIFT AND JETS HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT PLAYERS TOOK THE ICE AT CANADA LIFE CENTRE DURING THE INTERMISSION OF THE 2ND ANNUAL FILIPINO HERITAGE NIGHT ON JANUARY 13, 2024.

increasing costs and closed rinks, which stand to impact broader hockey fandom.

“Hockey in Winnipeg will not disappear but interest at the grassroots level drives the growth of all successive levels of play and it is what builds the funnel of future fans and supporters of the game in general – and the pool of players and coaches who will inspire, teach and mentor the next generation of players.”

Their strategy includes outreach to both emerging communities and non-traditional hockey communities, and partnerships with both corporate and community programs to introduce the game to people who might not consider hockey as a pastime. Hockey for all centre’s facility naming partner Scotiabank is a significant supporter in removing barriers to grow the game, investing in programming annually which has been key to keeping it

cost-free for participants.

“We are working to break the ice, so to speak, with more awareness and proactive programming to introduce the sport to new Canadians in an easy safe and accessible way.”

Enter Ron Cantiveros, publisher of the *Filipino Journal* and a well-known, highly-respected member of Manitoba’s Filipino community. Cantiveros is passionate about hockey and is convinced the game will soon be embraced by the people of his growing segment of Manitoba’s population. He eagerly accepted the invitation to assist in the planning of the Winnipeg Jets’ first Filipino Heritage Night game, held in December 2022, and has been a champion of True North’s efforts to grow the game among his and other growing communities.

“My five-year-old son had recently started TimBits hockey. It was a new experience for me as a new

hockey dad. I look back and chuckle that I was immediately told I was an assistant coach because I could skate and they needed volunteer coaches.

“I said, ‘Sure, why not? Happy to help.’ But at the time, I had no idea about running practices or drills. I was a beer league hockey player and I guess I knew a few drills from university, but you know, Lorenzo is still just six-years-old and he won’t know the difference.”

Lorenzo might not have known the extent of his dad’s coaching experience, but Cantiveros knew that in the right environment, hockey could grow in the city’s Filipino community. He was so invested in this mission that he looked into raising money for Filipino youth hockey initiatives, quickly learning there was no group in Winnipeg catering to his community.

With Scotiabank’s investment, Sattler and his

team were able to put their research and planning into action, introducing a pilot of their now growing First Shift programming in spring 2023. That first session eliminated some of the significant barriers to trying out the sport by providing free equipment and ice time to 50 youngsters, about half of whom were Filipino and half of whom were South Asian.

“There were some Chinese and Japanese players, as well,” said Cantiveros. “For me, it was good timing. I’m a hockey dad, I have connections at the Filipino Journal and I always wanted to have my son skate with the kids he was familiar with.”

After a successful pilot, the program extended to summer camps before partnering with APNA Hockey and Bauer to officially launch in fall of 2023 as First Shift.

“(Before First Shift) I didn’t really know that many Filipino hockey players. In



DAVID SATTLER (RIGHT) WITH RON CANTIVEROS (MIDDLE) AND MAGGIE CHAN-URBANO, FORMER QUEZON PROVINCE ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA PRESIDENT. QPAM, A KEY FILIPINO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, HELPED US ENGAGE FAMILIES IN FIRST SHIFT.

Lorenzo’s TimBits league there was him and one other player and that was really it.”

It was something that concerned the Cantiveros family and speaks to why he’s so engaged in getting more of his community on the ice.

“One day, I got a question from my son: How come there aren’t any players that look like me?” Cantiveros explained. “I would like to think that here in Seven Oaks, we’re in the heart of the Filipino Community, there should be. There should have been more, but there weren’t.”

The exposure of the Jets’ Filipino Heritage Night is changing that, bringing new curiosity and interest. When he went back to the community to recruit for the first official First Shift sessions, Cantiveros said the response was overwhelming.

“It was like an onslaught of yes, yes, yes. In fact, there was a waiting list of people who wanted to

get their kids involved.”

Lorenzo and 20 teammates from the Seven Oaks Minor Hockey Association suited up for an intermission showcase game at the Jets second annual Filipino Heritage night in January. “That was the biggest milestone,” said Cantiveros. “Because of that skate with First Shift, I can now confidently say that I can ice a team of 40 Filipino kids. That’s a 20-times increase just within this little micro-segment of a community.”

Cantiveros believes efforts are on the right track to continue growing interest among Manitoba’s 100,000-plus strong Filipino community.

“It’s also about educating the parents on a lot of things. I get a lot of questions from people. They want to play, but they always wonder, ‘How do I start? Where do I go? How do we buy equipment? Where do we register?’ It’s a learning

experience for parents, too.”

The questions he fields are encouraging because it shows interest and he knows work is being done to bridge the gap.

“The biggest thing for me is when you ask, ‘How do we make this grow?’ My answer is always, ‘If we have the funding to do it, I can always take it on and make it grow.’ In the Filipino community, we can grow this as big as

it can possibly be grown. If there is enough funding over the next couple of years, we can certainly start a hockey organization in the Filipino community. I’m not there yet, but we could definitely make it happen.”

### ALLAN CHAN AND THE EMPERORS

One of the most important members of the group that helps promote and organize the First Shift program is Winnipeg’s Allan Chan and back on May 19, Coach Chan’s Winnipeg Emperors Hockey Clun won another Canadian-Asian hockey title.

This year, the Emperors won the Over-40 championship at the 2024 Asian Hockey Championship in Toronto. It was the third championship for the Emperors (2013, 2018, 2024).

When the tournament started in 2003, there were eight teams and 120 players. This past May, more than 70 teams and 1,100 players competed for various national titles in seven different divisions, including three youth divisions (U-13, U-15 and U-16) and a Co-Ed Division.







MEMBERS SKATING WITH THE JETS



BY JOHNSTON HALL

Photos courtesy Jonathan Kozub and the Winnipeg Jets

# THE BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP

**H**eather Hill's mental scrapbook is overflowing – and many of the standout moments are not even of her own firsthand memories, but rather ones she's helped to create for others.

Hill's official title of Sr. Manager, Ticket Services doesn't paint the full picture of the memories she's helped to make for Winnipeg Jets Season Ticket Members, or the relationships she's fostered with them over the 13 seasons since the Jets' return – and even before that during her time with the Manitoba Moose. With her work to surprise and delight members through planning and executing many of the event and experience benefits enjoyed with membership, it might be worth adding 'memory maker' to her title.

"I love to show our members that they matter and give them something special through our events and experiences," she said, notorious for bringing a personal touch to all her member initiatives and interactions. "The best thing is that members leave with smiles on their faces and we know the experience they had is something they'll remember for a long time."

Hill manages the logistics of member contesting (exclusive contests available to members through the official Winnipeg Jets app) and gifting, while working to conceptualize new and exciting events as well as continue running signature events, always looking to build on the successes of past years.

"We are always looking for new and unique ways to engage our members, so it's really fulfilling to put

new ideas into production with the help of other True North departments."

One such new idea, which was a big hit in its first year this past season, was the full-team *Photo Day*. It was a complex event taking over the full concourse and arena floor and which was ideated three years ago when the level of interaction was just not possible due to COVID.

"It was so exciting to get back to intimate and interactive meet and greets and so worthwhile for our members," she said noting the event accommodated all members and also allowed them to each bring three guests. "I remember standing in the concourse taking it all in, seeing everyone smiling, kids running around having the time of their lives and thinking 'wow, this worked, people are so happy. Woohoo, go team.'"



Some of the signature member events include the *Draft Party*, *Family Skate*, the end of season *Paint the Rink*, and the *Member Appreciation Game* which offers fans a chance to uniquely participate in gameday through opportunities like riding the Zamboni, taking selfies from the bench or taking in a period of the game from the CJOB broadcast booth with Jets play-by-play announcer, Paul Edmonds.

Always a season highlight is the *Fly with the Team* prize, where a winner and guest board the team jet to take in an away game.

“That trip is really thrilling for our winners,” Hill said adding they also enjoy VIP treatment and behind the scenes tours in the visiting venue. She joins the winners as host, ensuring everything goes smoothly and recalled the most recent trip where she came away with two new friends.

“I love to get to know our members, so this is always a

special event for me too.”

The joy in Hill’s face was palpable as she recalled some of her own personal highlights – moments where she truly saw how much these experiences meant to fans – like the member who shared a special moment with Adam Lowry at last season’s *Member Barbecue*, the young fans meeting their hockey heroes at *Photo Day*, or fans’ awe in getting a behind-the-scenes glimpse through the dressing room tours.

“It doesn’t take the biggest prize to bring delight – something as simple as winning an autographed jersey or being on ice level can be such an exciting experience for fans,” she said.

If you’ve ever been to the *Photo on the Ice* event, she may have even helped direct your family pose.

“It’s an annual tradition for many members to use this on-ice picture as their family Christmas card. This one is really fun for me too because I channel my inner director and



**NORVA RIDDELL, KENDALL CARTER AND HEATHER HILL AT A MEMBER PLAYOFF PRE-GAME PARTY**

work with them to suggest creative poses they could do on the ice,” she said laughing.

She values the collaboration that goes into every event, working with teams from the membership service and sales team, TN hospitality and housekeeping to marketing, community relations and game production to bring member events to life.

“*Photo Day* in particular was a full court press – everyone went above and beyond to make it a success for our members, and I truly love the teams I work with who each bring something very meaningful to the finished product.”

Hill is currently planning the upcoming season kick-off *Member Barbecue* and all the interactive experiences that members can enter to take part in at *Season Ticket Member Appreciation Day*, Saturday, September 21.

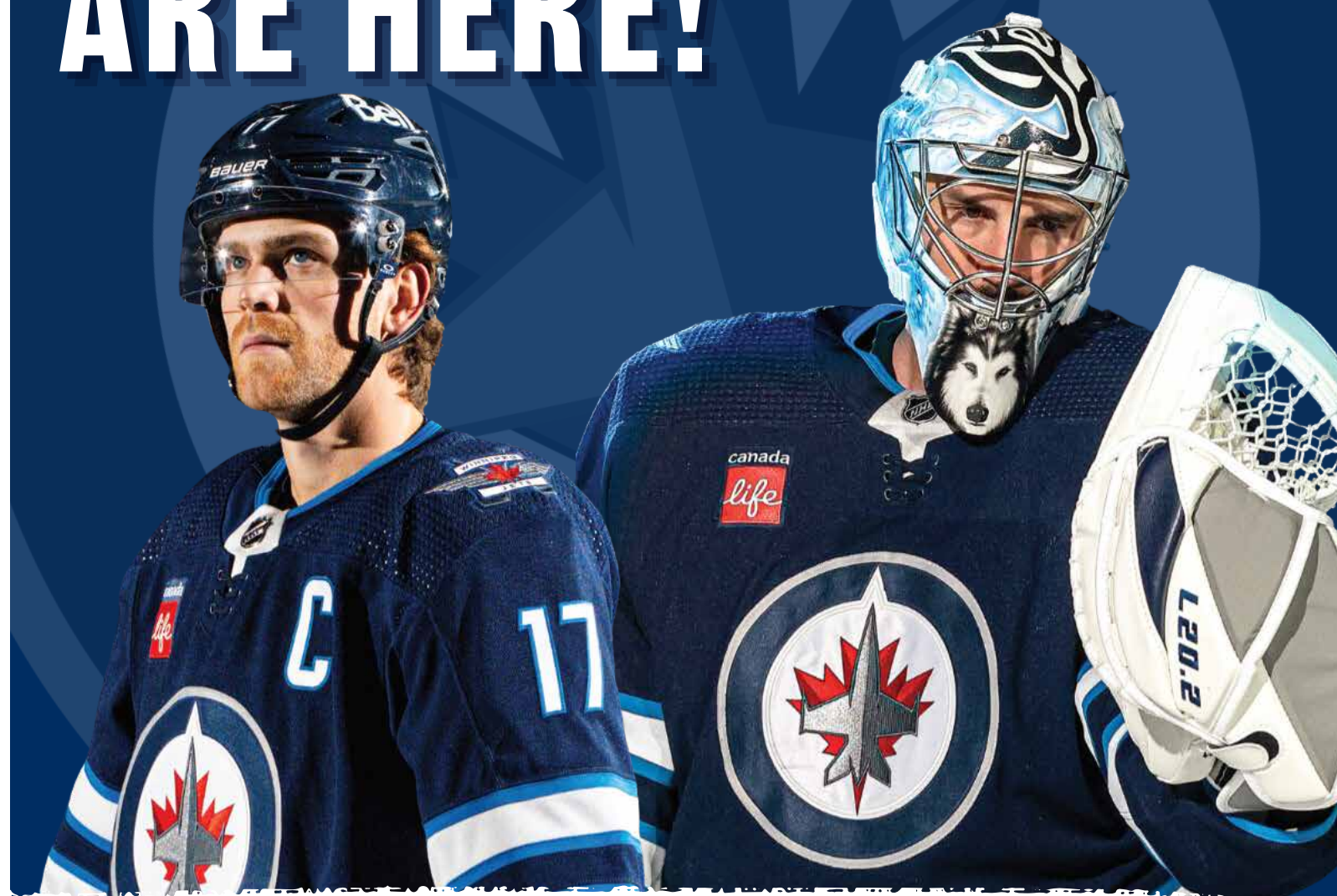
Whether full, half or quarter season, all members are invited to take in the



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# SCALE FOR SUCCESS

## In general, people do well with structure.

Athletes, in particular, can really thrive when structure is put in place. It helps with building routines and habits that increase motivation, confidence, and the likelihood of positive outcomes.

Structure presents itself in many ways throughout the typical day in the life of a professional athlete. There are scheduled times for practices, meetings and training sessions. Within the practices there are planned drills for specific amounts of time and in the training sessions there are workouts designed for development. These designed workouts also have structure within them in terms of exercise selection, exercise order, sets, reps, rest times, and loading parameters.

Having this structure allows the athlete and strength coach to record and track progress. That recorded information provides valuable feedback on the success of the program. It is important to have factual and tangible numbers to know if the athlete is moving in the right direction.

While we expect to see this structure in physical training, we do not see this as often with mental training, which can make our mental health and performance harder to track.

One tool that is available to bring more structure to mental training is called scaling. To create a scale, you first pick a mental health or performance metric that you want to track. For example, as an athlete you might want to track your confidence. You would write down a simple scale from 0 to 10. Once you have created the scale you assign meaning to numbers, so 0 could mean that your confidence has never been lower and 10 could mean that your confidence could

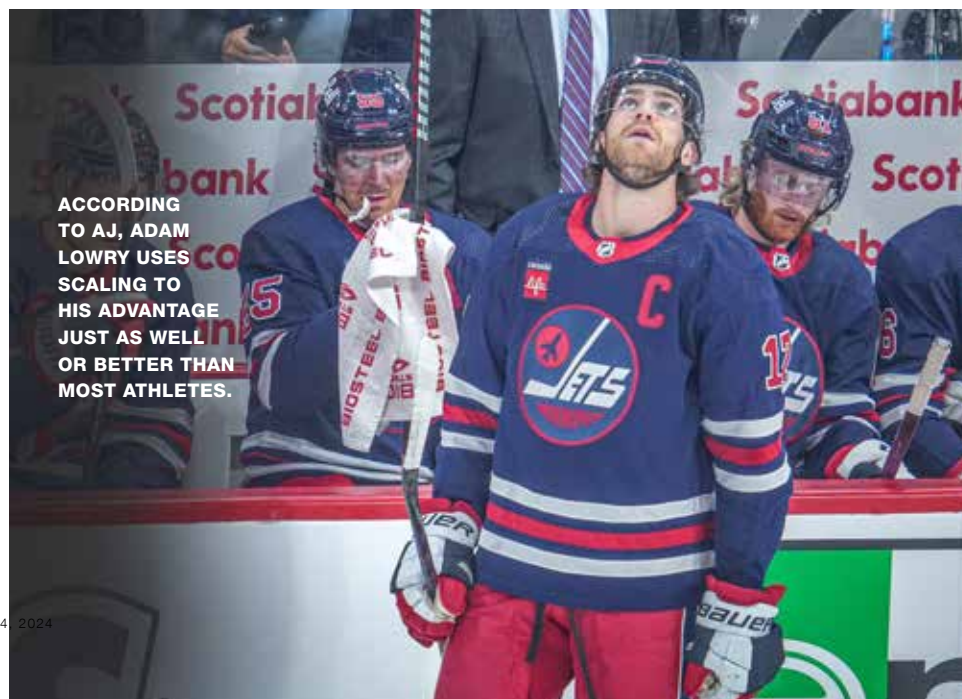
not be higher. You would then determine where your confidence was currently at on the scale. This next step is important: whatever number you rate your confidence you want to be detailed about what that number looks like to you and how you know you are at it. If you put yourself as a six on that scale you would then reflect on what a six looks like to you and how you know that's where you are at. The next step is to then determine what the next number, moving in a positive direction, would look like and how you would know you were there.

In this example, you would want to think about how you would know that your confidence had increased

one point on your scale to a seven. What would it look like? How would you feel? Be specific. This is how you create your next steps. Knowing what something looks like and how we know when we have arrived helps provide direction and helps figure out what to do to get there. Creating these next steps and having a tangible way to track it using a scale provides us with structure for our mental health and performance goals.

Treat your mental health and performance goals the same as your physical goals. Use scaling to create structure, track progress, and achieve your goals.

*Until next time, Strength, Courage, Hustle, Commitment*



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Photo by Scott Stroth





BY KRISTA SINAIKY  
Photos courtesy hockey for all centre



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**2024 U15 AA SHOWDOWN – GOLD MEDAL WINNERS TULLINGE TP FROM SWEDEN AND SILVER MEDALISTS KC SHAMROCKS WHO POSED FOR A GROUP PHOTO BEFORE PARTAKING IN A CEREMONIAL GIFT EXCHANGE.**

hockey for all centre prides itself on being a community hockey hub for all levels of on-ice talent. As the official practice facility of the Winnipeg Jets and Manitoba Moose, and the off-season training home to several NHL and pro level players who hail from Manitoba, it is the place to witness some of the world's most elite hockey skills. There's no better inspiration and motivation for young beginners, new Canadians learning how to skate and stick handle, and the wide-eyed up-and-comers alike than to be taking strides on the very same ice surface as some of North America's most skilled players.

"This is what makes hockey for all centre unique," said Dean Court, Business and Amateur Hockey Development & Programming Manager for the multiplex. "The breadth of skill and experience of our programs and participants ranges from the most polar ends of the spectrum, but the sense of community, the joy, and the pure love of the game is a common thread for anyone – player or spectator

– who enters our doors."

So, while most of the city's minor players will play on one of hockey for all centre's four rinks at least once over the course of the upcoming season, and as the facility continues to expand its programming to grow the game, even more high-level hockey will be introduced in 2024-25.

Adding to an already busy lineup of tournaments showcasing some of the most elite AA and AAA talents are five new events for the next generation of promising U15 to U18 athletes.

More than 60 teams will converge from across Canada and the United States, bringing scouts and spectators to hockey for all centre's brand new U15 (Oct. 18-20) and U18 Showcase (Nov. 7-10), hosted in partnership with the RINK, and two new levels of the Winnipeg Jets Elite Tournament, adding U17 (Nov. 28-Dec. 1) and U18 (Jan. 23-26) age categories to the U15 tournament (Nov. 21-24) which has been a significant draw for the past several years.

"Last year's U17 Showcase was so well received that they wanted to expand it to the U15 and U18 groups," said Court, noting Winnipeg's central location and the full-service venue amenities that make it an attractive draw.

"From access to athletic therapists, physio, a pro shop, a full-service restaurant with options to pre-book and catered meals, 15-minute proximity to shopping and other attractions, the all-inclusive nature of our tournament packages and our own groundwork to facilitate discounts on accommodations, oversee game sheets, medals, banners and awards – if you're a team manager or coach, there's almost nothing left to do but roll up and play."

The showcases will attract a significant scouting presence from Tier I and Tier II junior hockey well as many fans looking to take in the skill and intensity of play.

"All hockey fans are welcome, it's an exciting time and the rinks will be packed," said Court.

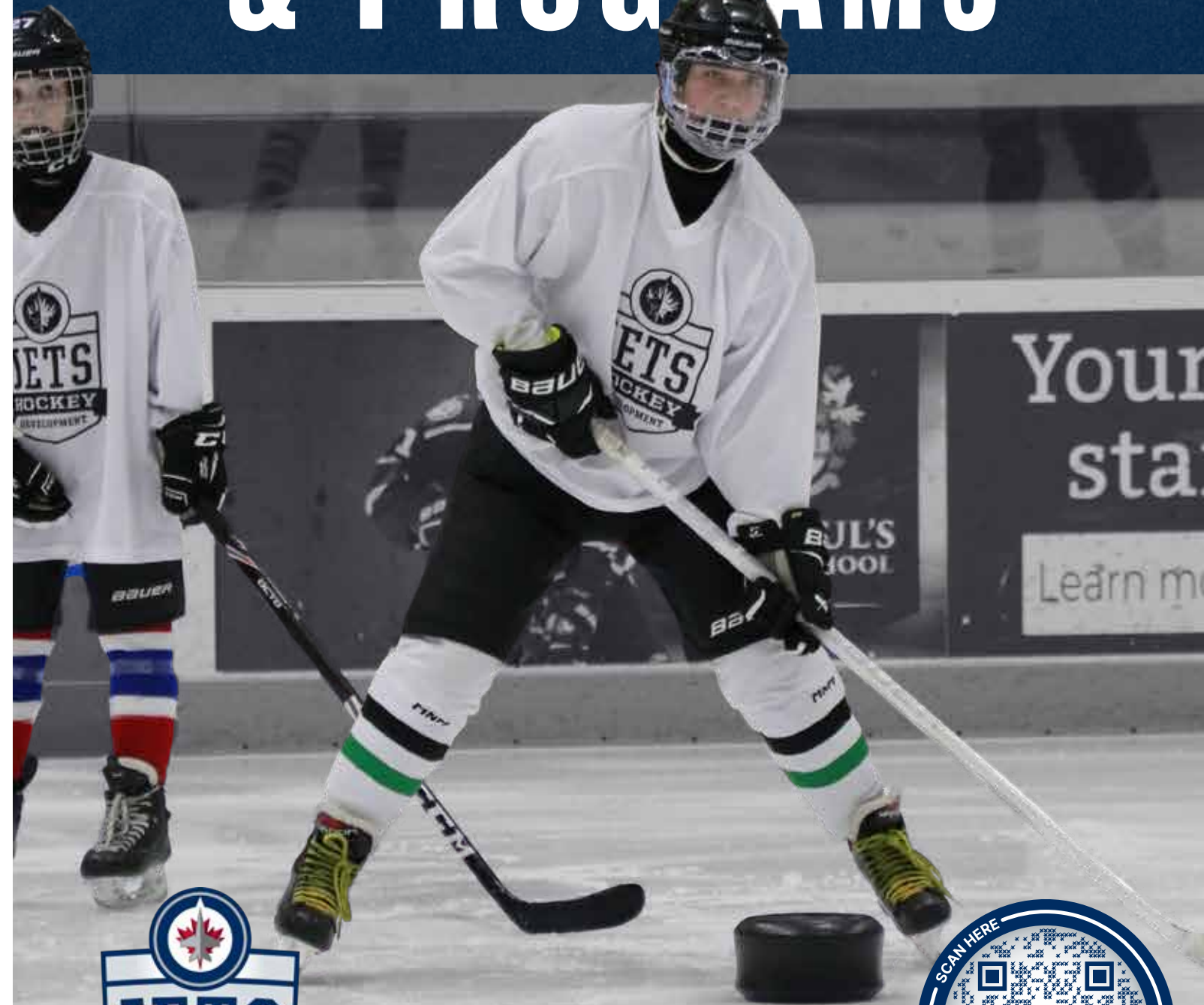
These new events add to a

regular schedule of training, league play, and signature and premier events – including the facility's largest event, the Winnipeg Jets Challenge Cup which welcomes 200 teams and 3,000 players over 10 days each December/January – bringing 70,000 players, spectators and personnel through the doors.

"This is the place where real life stories happen and lots of memories are made," said Court recalling the many meaningful interactions he experiences and witnesses behind the scenes of these events – from sharing in the anticipation of big moments, the excitement of big victories, and the pride of onlooking family members to stories exchanged of Winnipeg connections, full-circle moments and fond memories, and feeling the awe of kids who have a chance to meet and talk to their on-ice heroes.

"There is so much energy around the game; player or fan, there's something for everyone. If you're not already in love with the sport, you'll quickly fall at hockey for all centre."

# 2024 JETS HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT FALL CAMPS & PROGRAMS



U9 / U11 / U13 / U15  
JHD PRE-SEASON CAMPS







BY ANTHONY FUSCO

Photos courtesy Kevin Light/Victoria Royals

# KLIMCHUK JOINS THE MOOSE

A FORMER CALGARY FLAMES  
FIRST ROUND DRAFT PICK  
JOINS THE MANITOBA MOOSE  
COACHING STAFF THIS SEASON.  
MORGAN KLIMCHUK, 29, IS A  
TREMENDOUS YOUNG COACH  
WITH AN EXCITING FUTURE.







**“...JUST RELATABILITY. THE ABILITY TO... RELATE TO EXACTLY WHAT THE GUYS ARE GOING THROUGH IN THIS STAGE OF THEIR CAREERS”** – MORGAN KLIMCHUK

**H**ockey’s summer months often present new and exciting opportunities for players and staff.

This off-season saw Manitoba Moose assistant coach Nolan Baumgartner join the Ottawa Senators’ coaching staff. With a slot open on the Moose bench, Morgan Klimchuk jumped at the chance to put his best foot forward. Weeks later, Klimchuk became the newest member of head coach Mark Morrison’s staff.

“An opportunity came up through a connection with the Victoria Royals about whether or not I would be interested in interviewing for a position at the next level,” said Klimchuk. “Ultimately the decision to interview was one I was very excited about.”

The Regina, Sask. product impressed Moose brass through the interview process and steps behind the Manitoba bench with a focus on the forwards and

power play. Klimchuk is rising quickly through the coaching ranks after spending the past two seasons as an assistant coach for the WHL’s Victoria Royals. Stepping away from the Royals is bittersweet for the former Calgary Flames first round pick, but he knows the team is left in good hands.

“It was definitely a decision that was made with mixed emotions,” he noted. “I think what’s going on with Victoria is exceptional, and I was lucky to be there with such a great staff and a young up-and-coming team.”

Klimchuk is very familiar with the AHL after playing 274 AHL contests split between the Abbotsford Heat, Stockton Heat, Toronto Marlies and Belleville Senators. Injuries forced him to retire after the 2019-20 season. That recent playing experience gives Klimchuk a uniquely current perspective on the trials and tribulations prospects face over the course of a season.

“It’s just relatability,” Klimchuk explained. “I’ve played a decent amount in the AHL and I’m familiar with the league. The exact point the majority of the players are at in their career on the team is something that I’ve lived through. The ability to relate to exactly what the guys are going through in this stage of their careers is something that I do think is going to be a big advantage.”

Klimchuk is still early in his coaching career. He began working one-on-one with players as a skills coach. He then stepped behind the bench for the U15 program at Calgary’s Edge Hockey School before his two-season stint in junior. The 29-year-old is ready for the challenge and opportunity to continue to expand his coaching resume in the professional game.

“Taking a step to the next level is ultimately what I feel will allow me to continue to grow as a coach and to help players who are trying

to make it to the highest level. It’s something I’m very excited for,” remarked the newest Moose coach. “Now that the process is through and finalized, ultimately (my goal) is just getting on the ice and being around the rink and getting to know some of the players that will be playing for the team this year and definitely in the future.”

Klimchuk’s hockey journey has prepared him to take on a coach’s many challenges. Alongside Moose head coach Mark Morrison and assistant coach Eric Dubois, Klimchuk will be charged with developing the next wave of talent who have their sights set on becoming Winnipeg Jets soon.

*Ticket packages are on sale now for the 2024-25 season. Celebrate 25 seasons of Manitoba Moose hockey with a Full Season, 12-game Mini Pack, or 10-ticket Flex Pack. Visit MooseHockey.com for more information.*

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# FALL CAMPS & PROGRAMS



**U11 / U13 / U15 / U18  
ICE LAB PRE-SEASON CAMPS  
AA/AAA PRE-SEASON CAMPS**







BY CARTER BROOKS

Photos by Scott Stroh, James Carey Lauder and courtesy of Dylan Samberg

# TEEING OFF WITH THE PROS

**H**ockey and golf have long gone hand-in-hand. Golf is the Bonnie to Hockey's Clyde, what peanut butter is to jam. Like a boat needs the water, hockey players need something to do come summertime.

Sure, some professionals hit the courses much sooner than they would ideally like. The thought of a lengthier offseason is certainly welcomed by others, especially when tabulating the possible number of rounds including the months of April, May and June – as opposed to that of what the eventual Stanley Cup Final participants get: just July and August. No, no. No Cup winner would ever trade the opportunity to earn hockey's greatest prize for a couple more measly games of golf. But like anything worth doing, golf is a game of patience to

which its participants only show true improvement with considerable time spent in practice.

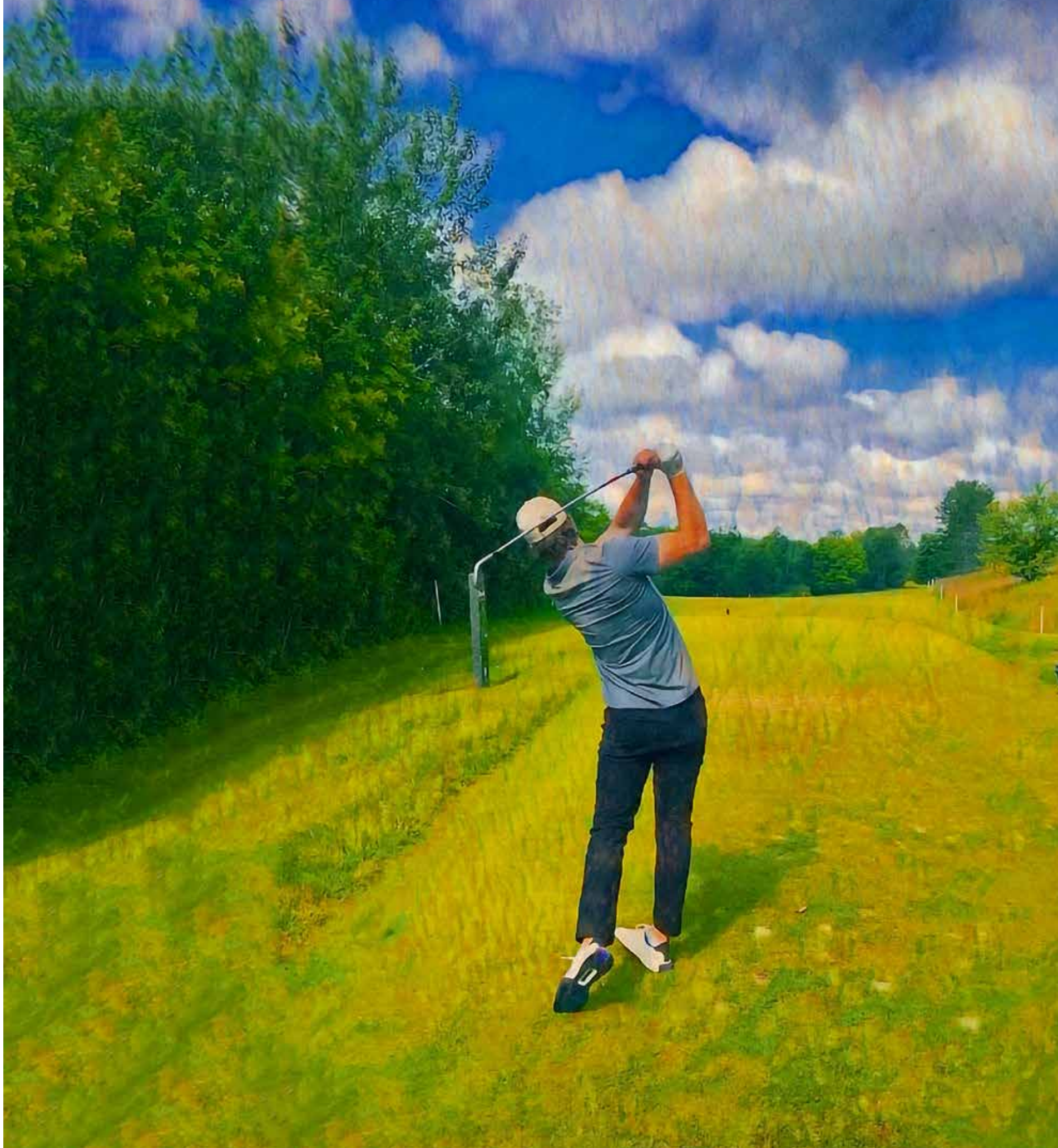
That desire for constant improvement is most certainly one of the driving factors leading hockey players to golf during their offseasons. And much like that of hockey, it is a pastime that most professionals picked up way back in their youth.

Exhibit A – Winnipeg Jets defenceman Dylan Samberg. Raised in Hermantown, Minnesota, Samberg enjoyed the rigours of golf, while also dedicating his time to football, soccer, baseball and hockey. He ultimately made the right decision in choosing hockey as his career path, but as he says, “golf was a close second”.

“I didn't really start playing golf until I was probably about 10 years old,” Samberg told *Game On*. “My parents were never really into golf. They

had some clubs in the pole barn, but they were both right-handed. And when I had some time after chores, I would just grab their clubs in the backyard and swing some golf balls around, but I was not very good at all. I was left-handed at everything else, so I figured I'd try some left-handed clubs. It felt a lot better.

“It was at that point that I decided to take it more seriously,” he added, “I got a dual membership at Enger Park Golf Course and the old Lester Park Course every summer from pretty much the age of 12 to 15 or 16. My parents would drop me off every morning at 7:30 AM and pick me up at 5:00 PM. And I would just play a bunch of golf. I'd probably play like 54 to 72 holes a day. Then I'd just go to the range and everything, and my buddies would meet me





there. Turning left-handed really got me into it.”

Although it’s typically rarer to see left-handed golfers out on the course, Samberg says that isn’t the case when you’re out with hockey players as much as he is.

“The more hockey players I’ve gotten to know, the more lefties I’ve seen – it’s funny how that works,” he laughed. “I don’t know, I find it rare to see somebody’s a lefty in hockey and righty in golf, or lefty in golf and righty in hockey. I honestly think that’s impressive.

Because I tried it when I was younger and it definitely didn’t work out for me. I feel like lefties are becoming more and more common.”

In late-August, Samberg will travel north from Hermantown back to Winnipeg, just a bit before the rest of his teammates. But he’ll do so for good reason. The 25-year-old was lucky enough to receive a sponsor’s exemption to suit up as an amateur in a field of some of North America’s best golfers at the 2024 *Manitoba Open* – a PGA Tour Americas



Fortinet Cup event, held at Southwood Golf and Country Club from August 22-25.

Samberg follows the path paved by teammates Mark Scheifele (2018), Kyle Connor (2019), Scheifele again in 2022 and Morgan Barron last year as sponsor’s exemptions from the Jets. The 2020 and 2021 tournament runnings did not occur thanks to the COVID pandemic. Southwood has hosted the *Manitoba*

*Open* 16 times and is home base for many club members from the Jets – Samberg included.

“This past year was the first time I actually got a membership here in town,” Samberg said.

“The couple years before that, I was just playing at different courses around the area. I was living with Cole Perfetti and we both decided to join Southwood. We only managed to get a bit over a handful of rounds in, but it was definitely worth it. I love that course; it’s difficult and fun.”

For Samberg, the idea of playing in the *Manitoba Open* is not something he takes lightly. Between the countless learning experiences and the potential for personal growth, the annual event has had Samberg fine-tuning his craft more often than normal. But that’s not the only thing he’s looking forward to either, as proceeds collected from the *Manitoba Open* will again be sent to the *True North Youth Foundation* and its work through Project 11 in supporting the Mental Wellness Program at *Camp Manitou* – an initiative that helps teach children the game of golf.

“Oh, it’s huge,” he said. “Sports or anything outside of what you’re doing on a regular basis is huge for these kids. I know it was huge for

me when I was a kid just to keep my mind active and off of other things. Golf is just another one of those sports to take your mind off of the regular struggles of life. And it’s definitely essential.”

Two years ago, \$115K was donated to the *True North Youth Foundation*, while \$62K was raised in rainy conditions last year. Dating back to 2013, the *Manitoba Open* has raised three-quarters of \$1 million for local charities within the province.

“I’m really looking forward to the tournament, I’ve been thinking about it for the entire summer pretty much,” said Samberg, who was just married in July. “I really needed to make sure my golf game is at its peak; I think it should be really exciting. I’m really kind of intrigued to pick these professionals’ minds, just to see how it is from a different professional sports standpoint. I would have loved to try golf, but I just don’t think I would have been making it very far playing only three months out of a year in Minnesota.”

# DO YOU HAVE A HOCKEY TREASURE OR COLLECTION?



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BY JOHN JAMESON

Photos courtesy the Manitoba Hockey hall of Fame and the Charleswood Hawks

THE NEW CLASS OF

# MANITOBA'S BEST

**THERE ARE SIX FORMER NHLERS, A STANLEY CUP WINNER, TWO GREAT TEAMS AND THREE INCREDIBLE BUILDERS.**

This year the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame will once again induct a tremendous collection of individuals and teams that have made a mark in the world of hockey.

The 2024 Class of Honoured Members will be feted on Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024, at CanadInns Polo Park. Ticket information will be posted online at [www.mbhockeyhalloffame.ca](http://www.mbhockeyhalloffame.ca)

So, who's joining Billy Mosienko, Andy Bathgate, Ab McDonald, Reggie Leach, Bobby Clarke, the 1964 Winnipeg Maroons and many others in the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame?



## PLAYERS

### DUVIE WESCOTT;

Winnipeg's Duvie Westcott won a WSHL title with St. Paul's Collegiate and then, after a successful season with the MJHL's Winnipeg South Blues, he earned a spot at the University of Alaska-Anchorage of the WCHA.

The following year he moved to the USHL and won a Clark Cup with the Omaha Lancers before returning to the WCHA with St. Cloud State. After a WCHA title and all-star selection in 2001, Westcott was signed by the NHL's Columbus Blue Jackets as an undrafted free agent. He played six-plus seasons and 201 games in Columbus and had eleven goals and 56 points while compiling 299 penalty minutes.

After the 2008 season, Westcott headed to Europe and played seven seasons before retiring in 2015.



Duvie Westcott, Columbus Blue Jackets

### LAURIE LANGRELL

Already an honoured member of the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame, Langrell started out as a defenceman in his hometown of Warren, MB.

In 1956 he played junior with the MJHL's Winnipeg Barons before joining the Winnipeg Braves in 1957. Converted to forward, he blossomed. In 1958-59 he was a league all-star and the Braves' leading scorer with 42 goals and 63 points.

Langrell helped the Braves win the 1959 Memorial Cup championship with three two-goal games. He followed up his Junior success with a seven-year pro career and later coached the St. James Canadians of the MJHL.

### SHANE HNIDY

Neepawa's Shane Hnidy had an outstanding Western Hockey League career in Swift Current and Prince Albert and was selected by the Buffalo Sabres in the 1994 NHL Draft.

After turning professional in 1996, he played minor pro for four years before a trade



Laurie Langrell, right winger, Greensboro Generals of the EHL

to the Ottawa Senators launched his NHL career.

Hnidy played 550 NHL games plus 40 playoff games with Ottawa, Anaheim, Atlanta, Nashville and Boston, winning a Stanley Cup in 2011 as a member of the Bruins. He officially retired on Aug. 31, 2011.

### BRAD MAXWELL

Maxwell came out of Brandon and won a Memorial Cup with the WHL's New Westminster Bruins in 1977 before being selected by the Minnesota North Stars in the 1977 NHL Draft.

He played 613 regular-season NHL games posting 368 points while amassing 1,292 penalty minutes between 1977-87 mostly with the North Stars.

He also suited up for Canada three times (78, 79 and 82) at the IIHF World Championship.

### RUSS ROMANIUK

Growing up in Transcona, Romaniuk was a multi-sport athlete, excelling in baseball, football, golf and hockey.

He was an outstanding MJHL player with St. Boniface and went on to play at the University of North Dakota.

He was eventually selected by the Winnipeg Jets in the 1988 NHL Draft. After two more All-Star seasons at UND, he joined the Jets in 1991.

He enjoyed a 10-year pro career, including six years in Europe, and had two tours with the Canadian National Team.



Shane Hnidy at home in Neepawa with the Stanley Cup



Brad Maxwell with the old Minnesota North Stars



Russ Romaniuk





Manitoba's Southeast Prairie Thunder, the 2012 Allan Cup Champions



Kelly Moore in the CJOB broadcast booth

## TEAMS

### SOUTHEAST PRAIRIE THUNDER 2011-2012 ALLAN CUP CHAMPIONS

Prairie Thunder, an outstanding team of Senior All-Stars, lost the Allan Cup final in 2009, and were eliminated in tournament play in 2010 and 2011. But in 2012, GM Marv Kornelson put together his strongest team ever, including a last-minute signing of former NHLer Terry Yake.

At the 2012 Allan Cup tournament in Lloydminster, Sask., the Prairie Thunder defeated Rosetown 4-1 in the final. After three years of heartbreak, The Thunder had finally captured Canada's top amateur hockey crown, the venerable Allan Cup.

### CARTWRIGHT CLIPPERS (DYNASTY CATEGORY) (1986-92)

When the tiny town of Cartwright, MB, population 300, joined the South West Hockey League in 1982, management had to fill out a lineup by pitching players the prospect that playing on

the natural ice of the chilly 'Clipperdome' and driving across frozen southern Manitoba for an entire winter would be enjoyable.

In 1986, the Clippers – with a strong local lineup – knocked off the defending champion Spectrum Sportsmen to claim their first SWHL title. After a loss to the eventual champion Sportsmen in 1987, the Clippers sailed off on an impressive run of another five-straight SWHL titles.

## BUILDERS

### HARVEY BOLTON

Long-time Manitoba hockey official, Bolton, has worked in Northern Manitoba for more than 50 years. He started in Flin Flon, then later officiated in Dauphin and Thompson and also served as referee-in-chief in Thompson. He is still referee-in-chief for the Norman Regional Minor Hockey Association.

After moving back to Flin Flon in 1982, he worked SJHL and MJHL games, and playoffs, including ANAVET Cup finals. In 2023, Harvey was honoured by Hockey

Manitoba with the Frank McKinnon Outstanding Volunteer Award.

### WAYNE DESCHOUWER

Born in Holland, MB and raised in Mariapolis, MB, Deschouwer's involvement in hockey and many other sports covered nearly six decades as a player, coach, manager and administrator. After playing senior hockey at the age of 16 with the Somerset Flyers and eventually the Holland Rockets, he moved to Gladstone, MB where he was instrumental in establishing the Gladstone Senior Lakers.

He moved to to Winnipeg in 1994 and became GM and then president of the Charleswood Hawks of the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League. Under his guidance, the Hawks enjoyed a phenomenal run, winning 12 league titles.

In addition to his involvement with the MMJHL Hawks, Wayne was the President of the Tiger Hills Senior Hockey League and held the post for 23 years. He received the 2011-12 Hockey Manitoba Volunteer of the Year award.

### JACK MCKENZIE

McKenzie began volunteering to coach playground hockey in River Heights during the early 1960s. He recognized that upon graduation from Juvenile hockey, the only opportunity players had to continue playing competitively was Junior A. For some players, the practice and travel schedule commitment of Junior hockey, coupled with school studies, was too much to handle.

So, he helped found what was determined a new Jr. B league. However, unable to come to an agreement with the CAHA and MAHA, the new "outlaw league" became the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League. Today, the MMJHL is a Hockey Manitoba member and has 10 teams across Winnipeg and into rural Manitoba. Every year the league champion is awarded the Jack McKenzie Trophy.

## MEDIA

### KELLY MOORE

Kelly Moore's broadcasting career began in 1976 at CFVR in Abbotsford, B.C. He eventually got to Kamloops and after 18 years there, he was selected to step into the chair as the radio voice of the Winnipeg Jets on CJOB.

After the Jets' departure in 1996, Moore called the first 10 seasons of the IHL/AHL Manitoba Moose, being named International Hockey League Broadcaster of the Year on two different occasions (1997, 1999). In 2006, he was named the radio winner of the James H. Ellery Memorial Award as the top radio broadcaster in the

American Hockey League.

In 2011, the Atlanta Thrashers moved to Winnipeg and Kelly took over CJOB's hockey coverage.

## OFFICIALS

### PAUL KRESTANOWICH

Born in Winnipeg and raised in River Heights, Paul Krestanowich's involvement in hockey spans over five decades, as a player, official, coach, and administrator. While playing hockey with the Charleswood Hawks of the MMJHL, Krestanowich also refereed minor hockey. He would use the experience to embark on a 21-year career as a certified Hockey Manitoba Official.

Serving as Referee-in-Chief of the Assiniboine Park Hockey Association (APHA) starting in 1987, he held the post until 1991 when he became a Hockey Manitoba Referee Supervisor for the next 10 years. In addition to his refereeing assignments, Krestanowich has coached minor hockey at all levels from Initiation to AA to high school hockey.



Paul Krestanowich at the 2016 Winter Classic

## GRASSROOTS SELECTION

### LAURENT KERBRAT

When Kerbrat stepped into the role of ice-maker in St. Laurent, MB, there was never any doubt that the local area kids were going to be playing hockey every winter. St. Laurent was one of the few remaining rinks in Manitoba with natural ice. For 35 years, when the temperature dropped to the right level, he would take up a second residence at the rink to get the ice ready for the kids' hockey season.

Over several days, he'd bunk in the rink every night, waking up every few hours to give the rink a flood. In 2008, Kerbrat was presented with the RBC Local Hockey Leader Award at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto.

## VETERANS

### ED REIGLE

Born in Winnipeg in 1924, Reigle was a graduate of the MJHL. His 11-year pro career began with the Indianapolis Capitals in the AHL in 1944 and would include 17 games with the NHL Boston Bruins during the 1950-51 season.

He returned to finish out his minor-pro career in the AHL before being named the Director of the Ice Hockey Association of Sweden (and its 1300 teams). He would soon turn Sweden into a hockey force. In 1962, Sweden won its first world title in Colorado Springs.

He left Sweden after the 1960 Olympics, eventually returning to Europe in 1962,

coaching in Switzerland where he'd win a Swiss Cup title in 1965 with SC Bern before guiding the West German National team to the World Championships in 1967 and the Winter Olympics in 1968.

### HAL WINKLER

Born on March 20, 1892 in Gretna, Manitoba, Winkler started his career in Manitoba in 1913 with the Winnipegs of the Manitoba Senior League. He turned pro in 1921 with the Edmonton Eskimos and won two WCHL titles. Despite Winkler's heroics Edmonton lost the 1923 Stanley Cup final to the Ottawa Senators. In 1926 the WCHL folded, and Winkler became the first goaltender of the expansion New York Rangers. Sent to Boston on January 17, 1927, Winkler's play would take the Bruins to the 1927 Stanley Cup final, but Boston lost to the Ottawa Senators.

In the 1927-28 season, Winkler recorded 15 shutouts in 44 games for the Bruins. Today's NHL season is almost double what it was in 1927-28, and Winkler remains tied for second for most shutouts in a single NHL season. Even though he had played the whole 1928-29 season in the minors with the Minneapolis Millers, Winkler's name was added to the 1929 Boston Bruins on the Stanley Cup when it was redone in 1957-58.

*Nominations for the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame come from the public. If you would like to submit an individual or team for consideration, please go to the MBHFF website at; [www.mbhockeyhalloffame.ca](http://www.mbhockeyhalloffame.ca) and download our nomination forms.*



Ed Reigle in Sweden



Hal Winkler with the Boston Bruins in 1928-29



The late Wayne Deschouwer with the Charleswood Hawks





BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos courtesy of the Western Hockey League and Denton Mateychuk

# HEADING TO CAMP

IT MIGHT BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR A JUNIOR HOCKEY PLAYER TO HAVE A BETTER SEASON THAN DOMINION CITY, MANITOBA'S DENTON MATEYCHUK HAD DURING THE 2023-24 CAMPAIGN.

**LET'S RECAP.**

The 19-year-old captain of the Moose Jaw Warriors was named winner of the Bill Hunter Memorial Trophy as the top defenceman in the Western Hockey League. He was a WHL East First Team All-Star. He led the

WHL playoffs in assists with 19 and was named the Playoff MVP while leading the Warriors to the WHL Championship. He was named a Canadian Hockey League First Team All-Star and won the George Parsons Trophy, emblematic of the Most Sportsmanlike Player at the Memorial Cup tournament. He was also named to the Memorial Cup All-Star team.

He played for Team Canada at the IIHF 2024 World U20 Championship and after the Memorial Cup, he was sent by the National Hockey League's Columbus Blue Jackets directly to the American Hockey League's Cleveland Monsters to help the Monsters in the playoffs. In four post-season games, the 5-foot-11, 190-pound D-man had three assists.

In a few weeks, he'll be the spotlight rookie at the Columbus Blue Jackets training camp. He was selected

by the Jackets in the first round (12th overall) in the 2022 NHL entry draft and has been told there is a spot on this year team if he, "earns it."

"It's the NHL, there is no guarantee," Mateychuk said as he drove from Dominion City to the RINK to workout one day this past summer. "They haven't said too much to me about anything like that. They've just said you have to earn it if you're going to be with the big club."

The NHL always seemed to be in Mateychuk's future. It's not like he just became a dominant player. He's been the big dog at every level in which he's played.

Of course, there might be a reason for that. His family is ridiculously athletic. His mom, Keela, was the 2003 Manitoba Women's Half Marathon champion. His father, Jason, was an outstanding baseball player who played four years at Mayville State in

North Dakota, was a nine-time Senior Champion and is an honoured member of the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame. Interestingly, Owen Pickering, the first round selection of the Pittsburgh Penguins (21st overall) in 2022, is Denton's second cousin.

"When I was younger, my dad would take me to skate whenever I wanted to," Denton told Game On's Jim Bender. "Being in a small town, he had access to the rink so I could go there whenever I wanted to. He always made sure I had the best experiences and best opportunities. He drove me everywhere and gave me everything I needed. He's just been such a big part of my life."

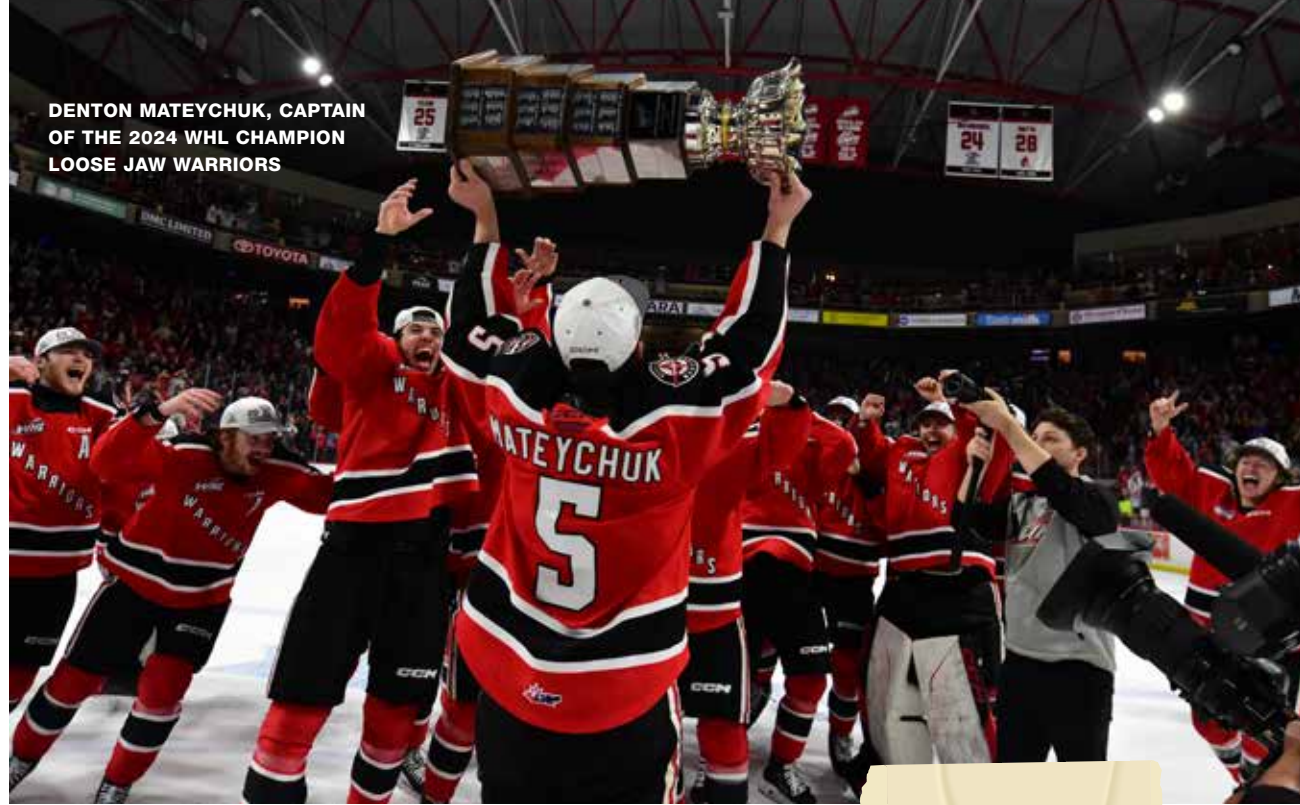
"I played all my minor hockey in Dominion City until U13 and then I went to play for the Eastman Selects for three seasons and then joined Moose Jaw at the end of the 2019-20 season."



DENTON MATEYCHUK PLAYING A PRE-SEASON GAME WITH COLUMBUS



**DENTON MATEYCHUK, CAPTAIN OF THE 2024 WHL CHAMPION LOOSE JAW WARRIORS**



Mateychuk was a superb player for the Warriors, spending bits of five seasons in Moose Jaw (with breaks for the COVID pandemic). Over his final three full seasons, the rock-solid defenceman spent two years as captain and scored 38 goals and 204 points in just 180 games. He played on Canada's U18 national team in 2021 and Canada's World Junior Team in 2024.

However, his 2023-24 season might be unmatched.

"That was a pretty good season, I added a few trophies to the trophy case," he said with a laugh. "I really think a season like that starts with work ethic and continuing to work hard all season long. I don't think you can ever stop working hard."

Here was the NHL's Central Scouting Service's assessment of Mateychuk on the day he was drafted.

"An offensive defenseman with a high motor, Mateychuk has a unique skill set that gives him the potential to be an explosive, dynamic

NHL player. He isn't overly tall, listed at 5-10, but he's solidly-built at 194 pounds and isn't afraid to play with a physical edge.

"Mateychuk is a unique player with a relentless style. He skates miles every night, rushing up the ice to be involved in nearly every offensive sequence and recovering back in the defensive zone to cover himself at that end.

"It sometimes seems like position is a mere suggestion to him, as he activates all over the ice and makes plays as he sees fit. Mateychuk's skating enables him to do that, as his straight-line speed and mobility on his edges allow him to cover ground with ease. There's inherent risk with the way he plays, but his skating is strong enough that it's less risky than expected because he recovers so well."

If you believe the scouts, it would appear that Denton Mateychuk has a legitimate chance to become one of the best NHL players ever produced in Manitoba.

## THE MATEYCHUK FILE

**DENTON MATEYCHUK**  
**COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS (NHL)**  
**CLEVELAND MONSTERS (AHL)**

POSITION: D

BIRTHDATE: JULY 12, 2004

HOMETOWN:  
DOMINION CITY, MANITOBA

HEIGHT: 5'11"

WEIGHT: 195 POUNDS

SHOOTS: L

NHL DRAFT: 2022/FIRST ROUND/  
12TH OVERALL/MOOSE JAW WARRIORS

PREVIOUS TEAMS:  
TEAM MANITOBA, TEAM CANADA,  
MOOSE JAW WARRIORS (WHL)







# ABSOLUTE BRILLIANCE

BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by Darryl Gershman, James Carey Lauder and Scott Stroh

NOT MANY HAVE HAD THE SORT OF EXPERIENCES THAT SOON-TO-BE 18-YEAR-OLD **STEPHANIE JACOB** HAD THIS PAST YEAR.

The 5-foot-6 Winnipeg Ice forward who has just comfortably settled into her new NCAA Division I stall and dorm room at the University of Maine was named the Manitoba Female Hockey League's Most Valuable Player for 2023-24.

As well, with 53 goals and 73 points total points on the year, she blew away the MFHL's competition and finished the year as the leading scorer – by a country mile. She was also named the league's Top Forward and was a first team all-star. Jacob set new personal records both on the ice and in the gym,

MVP, TOP SCORER, AND TOP FORWARD **STEPHANIE JACOB**, OF THE WINNIPEG ICE, BEING PRESENTED WITH THE CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY AND BANNER

while concluding her high school career as a graduate of River East Collegiate.

And to top it off, she was just recognized as Merit's *Game On* Magazine Female Player of the Year in Manitoba.

Perhaps, even more importantly, she led the Winnipeg Ice to a second-straight Provincial U18 Championship. That pretty much covers all the

bases of her profound success.

"I believe Steph is the best player in our league," said Ice head coach Eugene Kaminsky. "No player I've ever coached has her knack for scoring goals."

Despite her absolute brilliance, there were other MFHL U18 AAA players who had great seasons. Let's meet them.



HALLIE FRANKLIN, WESTMAN WILDCATS

DARA THOMPSON, YELLOWHEAD CHIEFS

IVY PERKIN, WESTMAN WILDCATS

ELYSE DENBOW, CENTRAL PLAINS CAPITALS



ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

IVY PERKIN, WESTMAN WILDCATS

TOP GOALTENDER

ELYSE DENBOW, CENTRAL PLAINS CAPITALS

MOST SPORTSMANLIKE PLAYER

DARA THOMPSON, YELLOWHEAD CHIEFS

TOP DEFENDER

HALLIE FRANKLIN, WESTMAN WILDCATS





KATELIN MOFFATT  
WINNIPEG ICE

ELYSE DENBOW  
CENTRAL PLAINS CAPITALS

HANNAH REAGH  
YELLOWHEAD CHIEFS

IVY PERKIN  
WESTMAN WILDCATS

HALLIE FRANKLIN  
WESTMAN WILDCATS

STEPHANIE JACOB  
WINNIPEG ICE



AVARY LAZARENKO  
WINNIPEG ICE

GINGER FAST  
EASTMAN SELECTS

MACKENZIE LIZOTTE  
WINNIPEG AVROS

DARA THOMPSON  
YELLOWHEAD CHIEFS

BREANNE COMTE  
WINNIPEG ICE

RACHEL HALLDORSON  
INTERLAKE LIGHTNING



# FIRST TEAM ALL-STARS



# SECOND TEAM ALL-STARS





# THE GOLD STANDARD

BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by James Carey Lauder, Scott Stroh, Ryan Sawatzky and Todd Pederson/Pederson Photography

## IT WAS QUITE A SEASON FOR THE MANITOBA JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE.

But for those who know the league well, it was just another gold standard season in Manitoba's top junior hockey league.

A new building is under construction in Steinbach, major improvements are being made to the old rink

in Winkler, the Blues and Freeze have found a new home at the hockey for all centre and the league confirmed strong, new ownership in OCN.

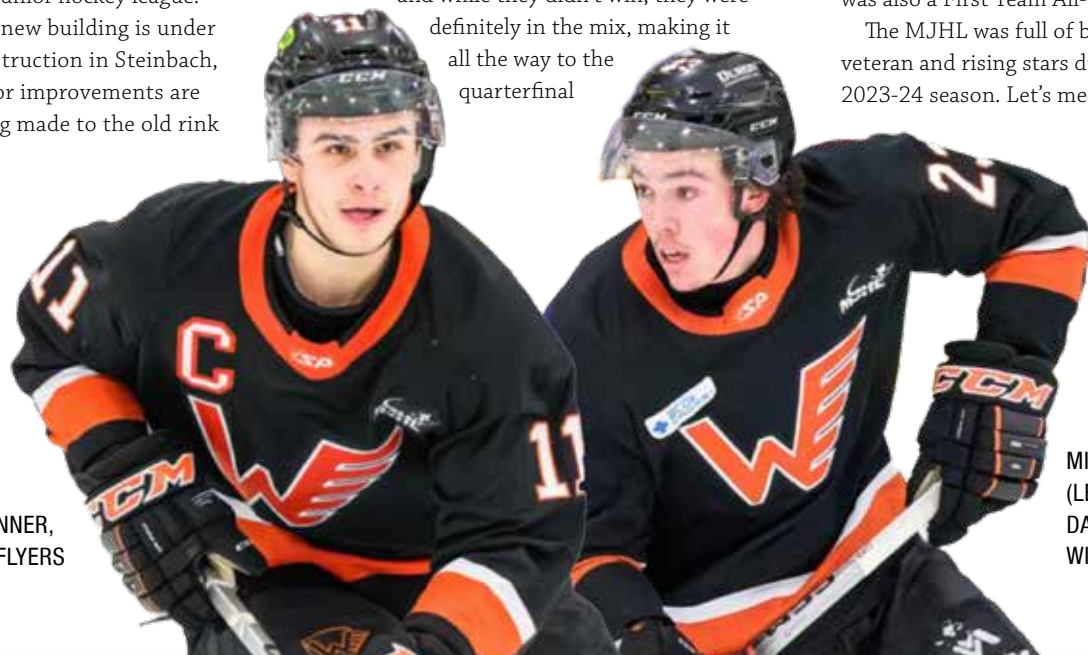
The champion Winkler Flyers played extremely well at the Centennial Cup and while they didn't win, they were definitely in the mix, making it all the way to the quarterfinal

while Dalton Andrew was named the tournament's best forward.

And dozens of MJHL players committed to major university programs including Winkler's James Richards (NCCAA Division I Niagara University), Portage's Ashton Fishley and Aidan Brook (U-SPORTS University of Regina), Virden's Grady Lane (U-SPORTS University of Manitoba), Steinbach's Cole Plowman and Winkler's Trent Penner (NCAA Division I Alaska Fairbanks) and Winkler's Dalton Andrew (NCAA Division I University of North Dakota).

The unquestioned star of the regular season was Winkler's Trent Penner who was named both the league MVP and First Team All-Star, while his teammate, Andrew, won the Mike Ridley Trophy as the league's leading scorer and was also a First Team All-Star.

The MJHL was full of both veteran and rising stars during the 2023-24 season. Let's meet them:



MVP:  
TRENT PENNER,  
WINKLER FLYERS

MIKE RIDLEY TROPHY:  
(LEADING SCORER)  
DALTON ANDREW,  
WINKLER FLYERS

## ALL-ROOKIE TEAM

- 1. MARLEN EDWARDS, OCN BLIZZARD
- 2. JAMES RICHARDS, WINKLER FLYERS
- 3. NATHAN BROWN, NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
- 4. RAIDEN LEGALL, NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
- 5. COLE SLOBODIAN, VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS
- 6. GRADY HOFFMAN, STEINBACH PISTONS



- MALACHI KLASSEN, WINKLER FLYERS
- THOMAS ANDERSON, OCN BLIZZARD
- NOAH SZABO, STEINBACH PISTONS
- CONNOR THOMPSON, NEEPAWA TITANS
- JOSH LEHTO, VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS
- ERIC LABROSSE, OCN BLIZZARD
- GRADY HOFFMAN, STEINBACH PISTONS

- TOP DEFENCEMAN - **NOAH SZABO**, STEINBACH PISTONS
- TOP GOALTENDER - **THOMAS ANDERSON**, OCN BLIZZARD
- ROOKIE OF THE YEAR - **GRADY HOFFMAN**, STEINBACH PISTONS
- MOST SPORTSMANLIKE PLAYER - **JOSH LEHTO**, VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS
- COACH OF THE YEAR - **ERIC LABROSSE**, OCN BLIZZARD
- COMMUNITY AWARD - **CONNOR THOMPSON**, NEEPAWA TITANS
- PLAYOFF MVP - **MALACHI KLASSEN** - WINKLER FLYERS





TAYEM GISLASON,  
PORTAGE TERRIERS

TRENT PENNER,  
WINKLER FLYERS

DALTON ANDREW,  
WINKLER FLYERS

NOAH SZABO,  
STEINBACH PISTONS

LEO CHAMBERS,  
STEINBACH PISTONS

TOMAS ANDERSON,  
OCN BLIZZARD



**FIRST TEAM ALL-STARS**



SEAN WILLIAMS,  
WAYWAYSECAPPO WOLVERINES

SEBASTIEN HAMMING,  
OCN BLIZZARD

JOSH LEHTO,  
VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

COLE SHEFFIELD,  
DAUPHIN KINGS

NOLAN CHASTKO,  
VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

KAYCEE COYLE,  
NIVERVILLE NICHTHAWKS



**SECOND TEAM ALL-STARS**





# NEVER TOO BUSY FOR HOCKEY

BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by Darryl Gershman, James Carey Lauder and Scott Stroh

## ERICA POUTEAU UNDERSTANDS HARD WORK AND DEDICATION.

Regardless, even for someone who is already rather exceptional, the 2023-24 school and hockey campaigns were just a bit above average, even for her. Not only did Pouteau graduate from the Honours Microbiology Program at the University of Manitoba, she also found time to finish fifth in scoring in the Manitoba Women's Junior Hockey League (not bad for a defender), was named the league's Most Sportsmanlike Player and then, to top it all off, was selected the MWJHL's Most Valuable Player.

"It was a good season," she said modestly. "I guess having personal success and having our team go as far as it did in the playoffs compared to all my other seasons were two of the biggest factors."

Although they were beaten in the championship series of the MWJHL

MVP AND MOST SPORTSMANLIKE PLAYER: ERICA POUTEAU, NORTHERN STARS

playoffs by Prairie Blaze, Pouteau's Northern Stars were the regular season champions blazing through the league with a record of 18-5-1.

"We had a good team this year," she said proudly. "We had a lot of rookies, but the rookies that Coach David (Stoesz) brought in had a huge impact on our team. All around, I guess we were pretty good. Our season speaks for itself (18-5-1)."

The 5-foot-6, 21-year-old defender has an average season remaining in the MWJHL and will take advantage of the opportunity. After speaking to Coach

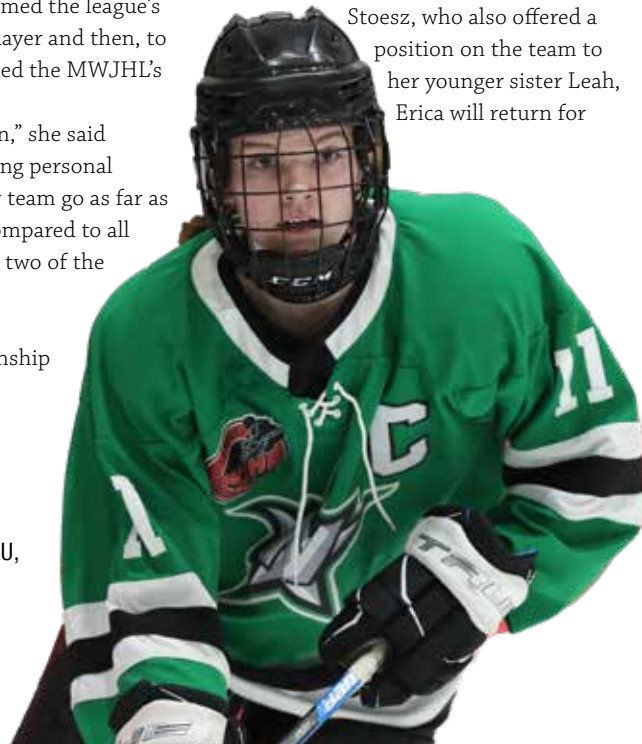
Stoesz, who also offered a position on the team to her younger sister Leah, Erica will return for

another year – just to have that final season on the same team as her sister.

"I got a position that I applied for," she said. "I'm was offered a lab technician/research coordinator job for the Healthy Human Development Group on campus at the University of Manitoba. The group is comprised of four psychology labs. It's a different realm for me but it works well for the grad program I want to get into -- a Masters in Genetic Counseling. It will also give me the opportunity to play my overage year with my little sister."

Pouteau, who was an MWJHL All-Star in her rookie season in 2019-20, finished the 2023-24 season with 14 goals and 30 points in 33 games. She was one of four Northern Stars in the Top 5 in scoring and had nothing but praise for her teammates.

"We keep each other motivated and humble at the same time," she said. "We all get along really well. That's what I enjoy most of all about this league. It's a place for me to go away from the stress of school. To have a good season is just a bonus to all the fun we have and the friends we get to make along the way."



RAYA HRANKOWSKI, SILVERTIPS  
AMELIA MARTIN, SILVERTIPS  
JASPER DEVLOO, NORTHERN STARS  
HEAVEN MONEYNAS, POLAR ICE  
CHRISTINE OAKLEY, SILVERTIPS  
TAYLOR WUIRCH-COOMBS, WESTERN PREDATORS  
ABEGAEL GLASS, PRAIRIE BLAZE

- FORWARD OF THE YEAR: **TAYLOR WUIRCH-COOMBS**, WESTERN PREDATORS
- GOALTENDER OF THE YEAR: **HEAVEN MONEYNAS**, POLAR ICE
- DEFENCEMAN OF THE YEAR: **AMELIA MARTIN**, SILVERTIPS
- ROOKIE OF THE YEAR: **RAYA HRANKOWSKI**, SILVERTIPS
- POINTS LEADER (REGULAR SEASON): **JASPER DEVLOO**, NORTHERN STARS
- MVP (PLAYOFFS): **ABEGAEL GLASS**, PRAIRIE BLAZE
- MIKE'S MEDIA AWARD: **CHRISTINE OAKLEY**, SILVERTIPS







HANNAH SOBKOW,  
MANITOBA GRAY OWLS

EMILY KOOP,  
MANITOBA BLIZZARD

ANNA BROWNRIDGE,  
NORTHERN STARS

CHRISTINE OAKLEY,  
SILVERTIPS

SAMANTHA CARVALHO,  
POLAR ICE

EMMA POOL,  
WESTERN PREDATORS

TAYLOR MORDEN,  
PRAIRIE BLAZE



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**JASPER DEVLOO  
NORTHERN STARS  
MWJHL SCORING CHAMPION**







# THE GROWTH CONTINUES

BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by Rayme Thompson, Derek Thorsteinson, James Carey Lauder, Scott Stroh and courtesy of the Lundar Falcons

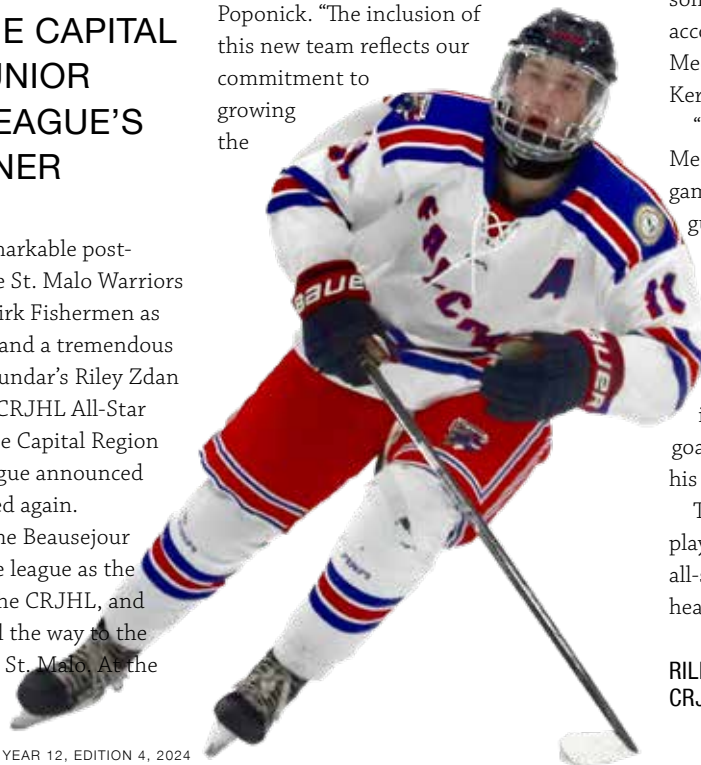
THERE ARE BANNER YEARS, AND THEN THERE ARE BANNER YEARS. CHALK THE 2023-24 SEASON UP AS ONE OF THE CAPITAL REGION JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE'S TRUE BANNER YEARS.

Coming off a remarkable post-season in which the St. Malo Warriors dethroned the Selkirk Fishermen as league champions, and a tremendous regular season as Lundar's Riley Zdan was named both a CRJHL All-Star and league MVP, the Capital Region Junior Hockey League announced that it had expanded again.

Two years ago, the Beausejour Comets entered the league as the sixth franchise in the CRJHL, and this year made it all the way to the league final against St. Malo. At the

end of the 2023-24 campaign, the league welcomed a seventh team into the fold as the LaBroquerie Habs became the latest expansion franchise in an ever-growing South-Central Manitoba Jr. B loop.

"We are incredibly excited to welcome The La Broquerie Habs to the CRJHL family," said league president Chris Poponick. "The inclusion of this new team reflects our commitment to growing the



sport of hockey in the Capital Region and providing more opportunities for young athletes to develop and compete at a high level. We look forward to seeing the Habs hit the ice and make their mark in the upcoming season."

Habs President, Ken Tallaire, said that both the organization itself and the entire community of LaBroquerie are "thrilled" to be joining the CRJHL for the 2024-25 season.

"We are very happy to be able to build on the tradition of hockey in La Broquerie by bringing a Junior B team to the community," Tallaire said. "There is already a lot of excitement from players and community members so we can't wait for the start of the season."

If the 2024-25 season is as thrilling as the 2023-24 season was, the excitement in LaBroquerie and throughout the league will be long-lasting.

And why wouldn't it be long-lasting? Most importantly, the CRJHL has some outstanding players. In fact, according to Lundar head coach Tyler Medeiros, MVP Zdan and Top Rookie Kerr are among the best of the best.

"Riley Zdan leads by example," said Medeiros. "He plays a physical 200-foot game every night. He's a defence-first guy who can thrive in any situation. Z has a strong work ethic, and he brings it every time he's on the ice."

"Kennedy Kerr really flourished in his first CRJHL season. He loves to compete and continuously improve his game. He's a confident goaltender who backs it up and his team is confident in him."

This league is loaded with star players. Let's meet the 2023-24 all-stars and award winners as we head into the 2024-25 season.

RILEY ZDAN, LUNDAR FALCONS  
CRJHL MOST VALUABLE PLAYER



ASHTON DUBOIS, ST. MALO WARRIORS  
NIKOLAS BEAR, BEAUSEJOUR COMETS  
KASEN ANDRUSHKO, SELKIRK  
KENNEDY KERR, LUNDAR FALCONS  
JACK SPEECHLEY, NORTH WINNIPEG SATELITES

TOP DEFENSEMAN: KASEN ANDRUSHKO, SELKIRK  
ROOKIES OF THE YEAR: JACK SPEECHLEY, NORTH WINNIPEG SATELITES AND KENNEDY KERR, LUNDAR FALCONS  
MOST SPORTSMANLIKE PLAYER: NIKOLAS BEAR, BEAUSEJOUR COMETS  
SCORING CHAMPION: ASHTON DUBOIS, ST. MALO WARRIORS





KASEN ANDRUSHKO  
SELKIRK FISHERMEN

TYSON BARYLSKI,  
ARBORG ICE DAWGS

RAY HEFFERNAN,  
SELKIRK FISHERMEN

RILEY ZDAN,  
LUNDAR FALCONS

DANIEL VALENTE  
NORTH WINNIPEG SATELITES

MICHAEL CRAVE,  
ARBORG ICE DAWGS

ZACH HALLDORSON  
LUNDAR FALCONS

JORDAN ARMSTRONG,  
SELKIRK FISHERMEN

KENNEDY KERR,  
LUNDAR FALCONS

NIKOLAS BEAR,  
BEAUSEJOUR COMETS

JEREMIE COLLETTE,  
ST. MALO WARRIORS

DAMON JOHNSON,  
ST. MALO WARRIORS

RILEY TIRSCHMAN,  
BEAUSEJOUR COMETS



ALL-STARS



ALL-STARS





# Murdock and Peguis: WHAT A SEASON!

BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by Kelly Jacobson

## IT WAS TRULY AN AMAZING SEASON FOR LYLE MURDOCK.

Not only did he tally 58 goals and 108 points in just 31 games to win the Keystone Jr. B Hockey League scoring title, but in this, his final season of junior hockey, led the Peguis Juniors to their seventh-consecutive provincial Jr. B title and was named the KJHL's Most Valuable Player.

"I decided to put the pedal to the metal for my final year," Murdock said. "I just decided to go all out for my team this season and give them another championship."

He certainly succeeded. Besides winning the scoring title, it was his overall 200-foot game that helped his talented teammates win another league title. And this year's championship also took place in a season in which the league expanded from six to seven teams by adding the Waywayseecappo Wild.

Of course, very few people know more about league championships than Peguis head coach Marty Favel.

When Favel played on the first Peguis

team to ever win a provincial Jr. B crown back in 1996, he called it, "A dynamite team." The Juniors have certainly had some dynamite teams ever since.

"We had Mike Spence, Konrad Bear and a bunch of other great players, we were really good," Favel recalled. "We won the championship again in 1998 and that was quite the feat. It still feels good today."

As it should. After all, Favel won the championship five more times as an assistant coach, first with Farron Cochrane in 2013, then with Mike Spence in 2016, then with Kevin Monkman in 2017 and 2018 and again with Mike Spence in 2019. This past season, as head coach, he led the Juniors to their seventh straight KJHL and Provincial Jr. B championship.

"It is amazing, isn't it?" Favel said. "There are a lot of good programs out there and the teams in our league have come a long way. Those other teams were young, but now their young players are stepping into leadership roles and our league is very competitive. But in Peguis, I think our success is based on two things, our winning culture and reputation as champions and our minor hockey program."

"There are a lot of good programs out there and even the teams in our league have come a long way," Favel said. "Those other teams were young but now their young players are stepping into leadership roles and our league is very competitive. But in Peguis, I think our success is based on two things, the winning culture and reputation as champions and the minor hockey program."

It is one of the most remarkable streaks in amateur hockey anywhere in Canada. A First Nation's team from Manitoba's Interlake has won the provincial Jr. B banner seven-straight times.

And they've done it despite an international pandemic that wiped out the 2021 playoffs and the entire 2022 season and post-season. They've done it despite the fact their arena burned down in 2006 and it was almost a decade before they were able to build a new one. They've done it despite having four different head coaches – Mike Spence, Kevin Monkman, Jason Smith and Favel – during the seven-win streak. They've done it despite the fact they were run out of their original league and

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER  
& LEADING SCORER:  
LYLE MURDOCK, PEGUIS JUNIORS

forced to create a new one. And they've done it despite of all the turnover that junior teams experience every year.

It is truly an incredible achievement. "This was the first time winning it as a head coach," Favel said. "It feels as good now as it did 30 years ago. Winning never gets old."

"It's pretty amazing what we've overcome. When we lost our arena back in 2006, we were without one for a long time and minor hockey in our community might have suffered, but our kids kept going, playing on outdoor rinks. So, the kids who have continued to play have always had heart and determination and really want to win."

Kevin Monkman, who coached championship Peguis teams in 2017, 2018 and again in 2023, believes it's the culture of winning that has been built up over the seven-year streak that makes the Juniors a rarity among competitive sports teams.

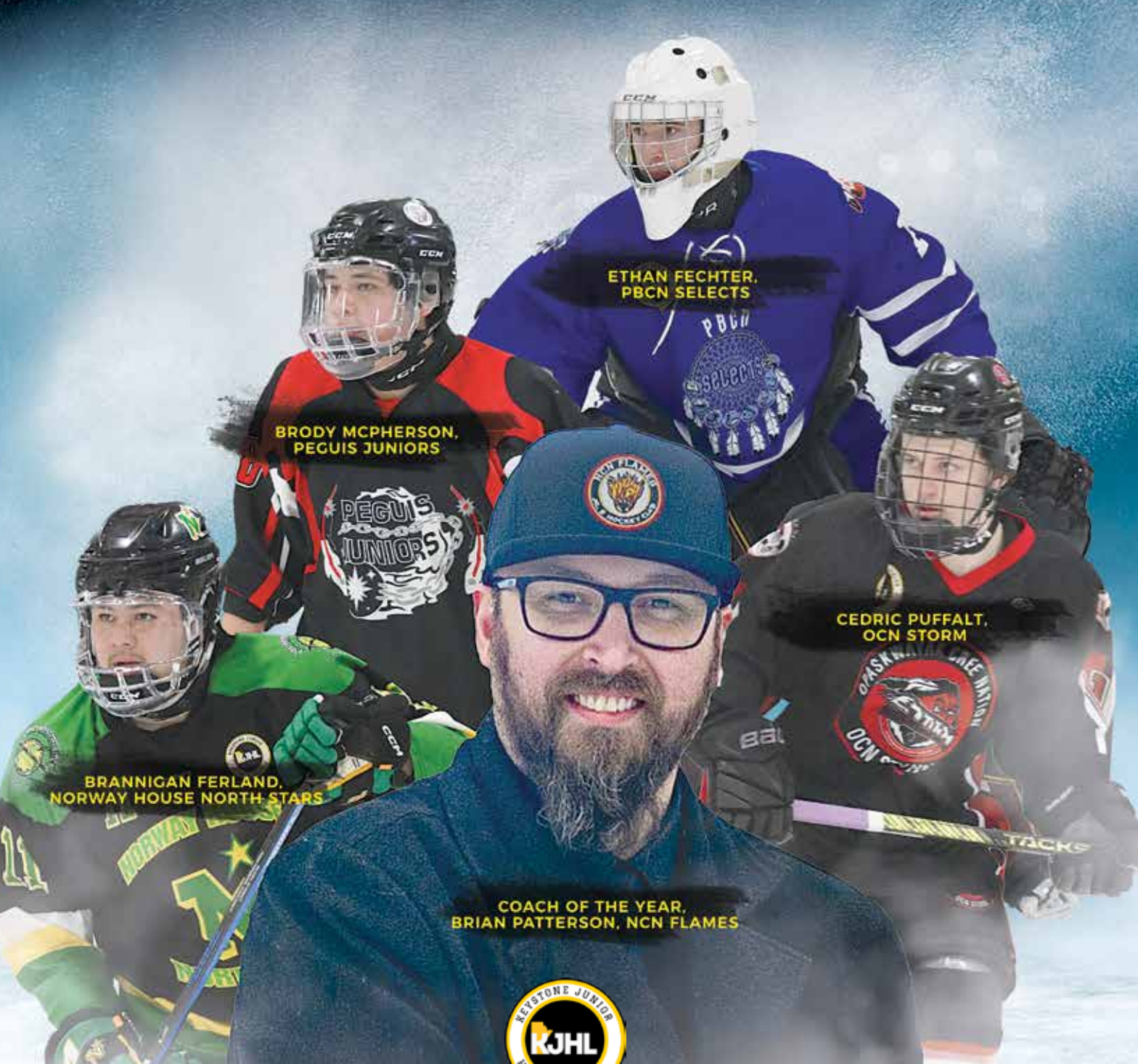
"This team has the culture of winning," said Monkman bluntly. "The legacy of the players makes a huge difference. Those players who were in the lineup in previous years, pass the torch onto the younger players and those younger players are taught the importance of winning. In Peguis, winning is kind of expected."

It's been an incredible run and with players like Lyle Murdock on the roster, it continues to this day.

Of course, while we're celebrating outstanding achievements, on the ensuing page, we'll meet the other KJHL award winners for the 2023-24 season.







**ETHAN FECHTER,**  
PBCN SELECTS

**BRODY MCPHERSON,**  
PEGUIS JUNIORS

**CEDRIC PUFFALT,**  
OCN STORM

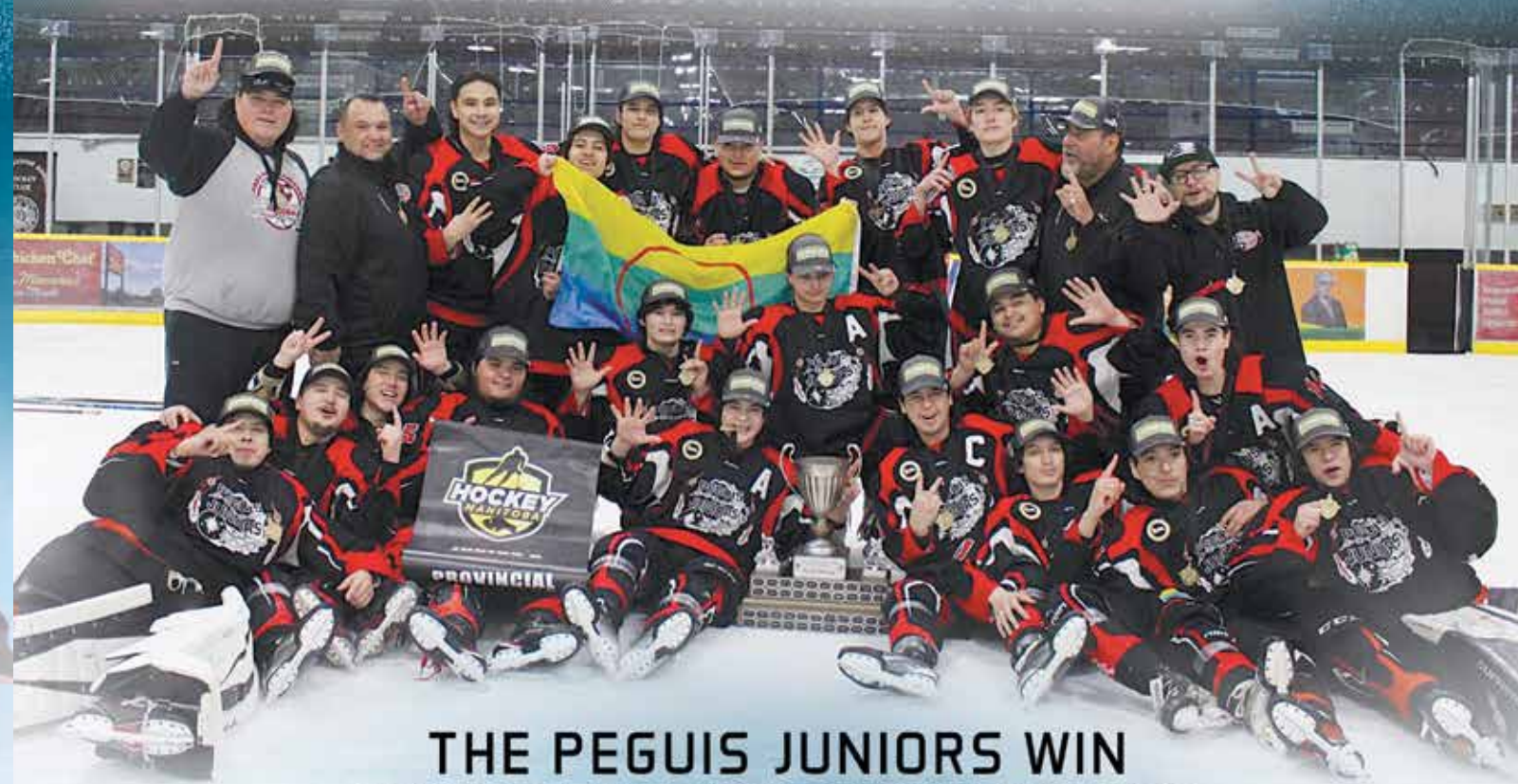
**BRANNIGAN FERLAND,**  
NORWAY HOUSE NORTH STARS

**COACH OF THE YEAR,**  
BRIAN PATTERSON, NCN FLAMES



COACH OF THE YEAR: **BRIAN PATTERSON**, NCN FLAMES  
 DEFENCEMAN OF THE YEAR: **BRODY MCPHERSON**, PEGUIS JUNIORS  
 TOP GOALTENDER: **ETHAN FECHTER**, PBCN SELECTS  
 ROOKIE OF THE YEAR: **CEDRIC PUFFALT**, OCN STORM  
 MOST SPORTSMANLIKE PLAYER: **BRANNIGAN FERLAND**, NORWAY HOUSE NORTH STARS

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# THE HARDEST WORKING MVP

BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by Scott Stroh, Merlin Heppner, Derek Thorsteinson, James Carey Lauder and Rusty Barton

AS HE TOLD *GAME ON* MAGAZINE EARLY THIS PAST SEASON, STONEWALL JETS' RIGHT WINGER **PEYTON BATEMAN** WAS INDEED NAMED AFTER NFL HALL OF FAME QUARTERBACK PEYTON MANNING.

"My parents were watching Monday Night Football and they saw Peyton Manning having a really good game," Bateman told *Game On's* Jim Bender. "I guess they kind of thought to themselves, 'Hey, that's a pretty good name,' and that's kind of how it went."

Peyton Bateman will certainly not claim to be a legendary athlete like his

namesake, but he is pretty good. In fact, this past season Bateman had 28 goals and 75 points in just 40 games, good enough for sixth in scoring in the Manitoba Major Junior League, and combined with his 200-foot play, he was not only awarded the Kip Kelly as the league's hardest working player, but he was also presented with the Myron Prymak Memorial Trophy as the MMJHL's Most Valuable player.

Not bad for a 5-foot-10, 155-pound local kid from Stonewall in just his second year in the MMJHL.

"He has the work ethic," Jets head coach Pat Power told Bender. "He comes to work every day, whether it's a game or practice and

he gives it his all every day, every shift. You don't have to ask him twice. He's always willing to bust his butt and work hard and he leads by example with his work ethic."

During a season in which the highly-skilled and heavily-favoured St. James Jr. Canucks won their third-straight Jack McKenzie Trophy as league champions. They dominated the regular season once again with a record of 37-7-0-1, Bateman's hard work and commitment to excellence was noticed by everyone around the league.

The second-year University of Manitoba Asper School of Business student was a perfect example of the type of smart, hard-working and gifted player who makes up the best of the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League.

Of course, there were some other stars this season. Let's meet them:



MVP AND HARDEST WORKING PLAYER – PEYTON BATEMAN, STONEWALL JETS



- PLAYOFF MVP AND REGULAR SEASON SCORING CHAMPION – **TYRONE WILLAN**, ST. JAMES JR. CANUCKS
- OUTSTANDING DEFENCEMAN – (CO-WINNERS) **SAM MITANI**, FORT GARRY/FORT ROUGE TWINS AND **BRADY WHITELY**, ST. JAMES JR. CANUCKS
- OUTSTANDING GOALTENDER: **NOAH GILBERT**, ST. JAMES JR. CANUCKS
- ROOKIE OF THE YEAR: **EVAN BANERA**, RAIDERS JR. HOCKEY CLUB
- COACH OF THE YEAR: **BRAEDEN BEERNAERTS**, PEMBINA VALLEY TWISTERS
- MOST SPORTSMANLIKE PLAYER: **TYLER RUBIGNY**, ST. VITAL JR. VICTORIAS





**FIRST TEAM ALL-STARS**



**SECOND TEAM ALL-STARS**





# TOP TWISTER

BY JOHNSTON HALL  
Photos by Merlin Heppner

ANY THOUGHT OF BEING A HOCKEY PLAYER AT ANY LEVEL WAS NEARLY TAKEN AWAY FROM DEREK WIEBE WHEN HE WAS 15-YEARS-OLD.

Wiebe, 22, was playing U-15 AAA for the Pembina Valley Hawks when almost suddenly, he couldn't skate without sharp pain in his lower back and groin. He actually believed for a time that his hockey dreams had been dashed.

"In 2016-17, I only played six games of bantam because I had some kind of growth on my hip bone," he said. "It started my first year of bantam and lasted an entire year. It was even hard for the doctors to find it. I had to go to a specialist. Every time I tried to skate or do anything vigorous at all, I had pains in my lower back and groin. It was terrible.

"It screwed me up for a long time and I eventually just gave up and stopped going to physio. Then it just healed. They didn't know how to treat

it and they didn't want to do surgery on a 15-year-old. So, they said, you might be able to play and you might not, but fortunately, without physio it just got better. Don't really know, it just healed and I was able to play. I played a full season of high school in my Grade 10 year (2017-18)."

For the Pembina Valley Twisters, it was a good thing he got better. After all, this past season, he wore the 'A' with the Twisters, finished with 20 goals and 67 points in 43 games and led his team to the finals of the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League. He was also named a First Team All-Star and is this year's PV Twisters Player of the Year.

And he did it all while completing his third year in the Kinesiology program at the University of Manitoba.

"I think it was all coming to the realization that this could be my last year of hockey at the junior level,"



DEREK WIEBE





**“ I THOUGHT I WOULD BE MORE CONTENT GOING TO SCHOOL AND PLAYING FOR THE TWISTERS. IT TURNED OUT TO BE THE RIGHT CHOICE. ”**

said Wiebe modestly. “I just really wanted to make the most of it and I think I came into the season with a really good attitude. I felt we had a special group this year and although we didn’t quite make it (the Twisters lost in the final to heavily-favoured St. James), we gave it our best shot.”

Wiebe was born and raised in Morden and grew up playing for the local Morden Hawks. When bantam rolled around, he made the jump to the U15 AAA Pembina Valley Hawks AAA. After his injury-plagued 2016-17 season, he played high school hockey in Morden in Grade 10 and then, in Grades 11 and 12, played for the U18 AAA Pembina Valley Hawks again.

“I think my best year was 2019-20 in Grade 12,

my last year with the U18 AAA Hawks,” he said. “I was captain of that team and I thought we had a great chance to win it all. We had such a good team. Almost everyone on that team went on to play Jr. A or higher. That playoff run in 2020 was the best hockey memory I’ve had. But after winning the first round of the playoffs we got shut down by COVID.

“After that I joined the Winkler Flyers for two years, but I really didn’t think that was a fit for me so I asked for a trade to OCN because I had a few buddies playing there. It was good, I went up there for a couple of weeks but I also enrolled in my classes at the U of M. So, I went up there for a couple of weeks and liked it, but I thought I would be more content

going to school and playing for the Twisters. It turned out to be the right choice.”

“Given my size (5-foot-9, 170 pounds), I didn’t think I’d really go anywhere after Jr. A. I wasn’t quite good enough to play NCAA D-1 or even U-SPORTS. I also didn’t have a lot of experience going into my 20-year-old year considering that we only played six games in 2020-21 because of COVID. Then I had mono in my second year in Winkler and then separated my shoulder. That was a tough year because both my illness and injury came before Christmas, so I only played about 25 games that year. I ultimately thought that if I played for the Twisters and went to university, I could start chipping away at my degree.”

Wiebe has a year-and-a-half left to complete his Kinesiology degree then his plan is to apply for the Masters’ program in physiotherapy. He spent the summer of 2024 living in Morden and working construction to prepare for his move back to Winnipeg for the 2024-25 school year at the U of M.

In the meantime, he can look back on a terrific 2023-24 season with the Twisters.

“I’m probably going to play some senior hockey, but it’s not the same as junior,” he admitted. “It’ll be fun but I think ultimately, I had a good season this past year because I just came to the realization this would be my last year of junior and I really wanted to be the player I knew I could be for the team. Things went well and we had a bit of luck, too.”

THREE-TIME MMJHL CHAMPION  
**PEMBINA VALLEY  
 TWISTERS**

ARE PROUD TO BE A PART OF THE  
 MANITOBA MAJOR JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE



MIKE HEPPNER

ZANDER CARELS

LOGAN ENNS



MORRIS BIGWAY FOODS IS A PROUD SUPPORTER OF  
 THE PEMBINA VALLEY TWISTERS AND  
 THE MANITOBA MAJOR JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE



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BY CARTER BROOKS

Photos by Dylan Asmundson, Rusty Barton and Scott Stroh

GAVIN WORKING  
OUT AT THE  
FACILITY

# GAVIN HODNETT PROVING THEM WRONG

FOR WINNIPEG'S GAVIN HODNETT, THE 2024 NHL DRAFT WAS JUST A STEPPING-STONE TO WHAT HE ENVISIONS A LONG AND SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL CAREER IN HOCKEY.

The 18-year-old forward of the Western Hockey League's Edmonton Oil Kings entered the two-day summer spectacle as a bubble player. Ranked anywhere from 171 to 254, overall, Hodnett found himself placed at the No. 223 spot on Central Scouting's final rankings heading into the draft.

Previously selected 19th overall in the first round of the 2019 WHL Prospects Draft by the Oil Kings, the speedy playmaker understood the magnitude of possibly being drafted, but also entered NHL Draft weekend with the mentality that not being selected may actually be better for the trajectory

of his career in the long run.

"It's incredible", he told *Game On* of being a player listed for consideration at the NHL Draft. "It's something that you dream of, and something that I want to pursue. It's certainly been a goal of mine for so long, but like you said, I am a fringe player going into it. So, for me, if I were to get the opportunity to be selected, that's great. But, if it doesn't happen, I'm still in that mindset that I believe I'm going to get there. And I think it is just going to motivate me even more."

As it turned out, Hodnett was not selected at the 2024 NHL Draft. But he did

manage to land an invite to his hometown Winnipeg Jets Development Camp, where he skated with 35 other young NHL hopefuls making their case for professional contracts. Among those players were Jets' draft picks, protected players and camp invitees - to which Hodnett was classified.

"It definitely hurt not hearing my name called on Saturday at the draft," Hodnett said following the draft. "But, less than 24 hours later, receiving a call from the team I grew up idolizing was a great moment. It was the exact boost of motivation I needed. Going forward, I



will make sure I don't let any opportunity I am given to demonstrate my abilities slip away. I plan on continuing to work even harder, and I know it will pay off."

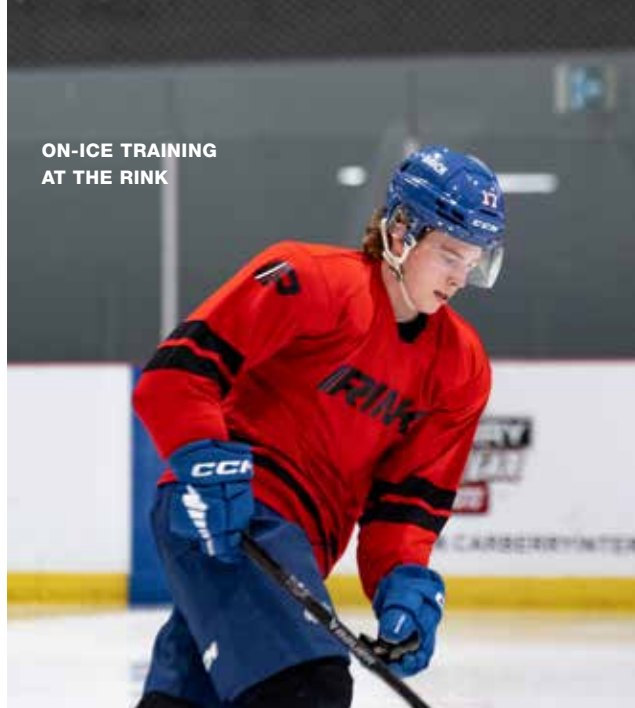
Sure, being chosen as an NHL draft pick is one thing, but a St. Vital product suiting up at the Jets' development camp? That's certainly a whole other experience on its own.

"I cannot believe how surreal it was to attend the very camp of the team I've been cheering for my whole life," he reminisced. "It was a really cool experience to see how it is to be a Winnipeg Jet. I basically lived the 'day in the life' for half a week. I know I really worked hard to get there, so I hope I left a good impression on the staff and team."

"It was a grind each day; we went from 7:00 AM until we went to sleep," he added. "I'm not going to lie, I was so nervous throughout the camp, just really trying to showcase my skills. Although I was nervous, I felt good for the most part of the week. It was amazing to meet the other guys and build so many new friendships. These guys love the game as much as I do, so it's great to be around others like that; it definitely motivated and pushed me to try even harder each day. It was great to also hear from the different speakers throughout the week, who talked about what it's like and what is needed to play at the NHL level."

Standing just 5-foot-8 and weighing 160 pounds, Hodnett knows his size may be a turn-off for some, but he has never let it get in his way of finding success.

"Honestly, I don't worry about that stuff," he said.



ON-ICE TRAINING AT THE RINK

"For a player to play in that league, you've got to have high hockey IQ and good skating. I think I have those tools, and it's just about getting the opportunity and taking it when it presents itself. What was big in the 1970s or even the 2000s... it's totally different than what it is now."

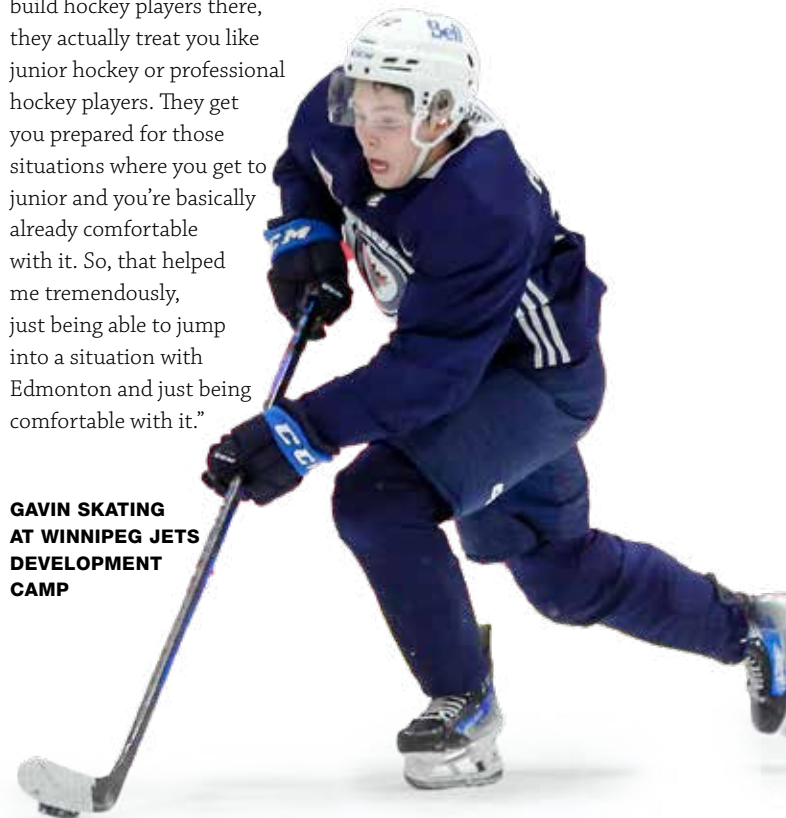
One way Hodnett has made the most of his opportunities was his decision to sign with RINK Winnipeg, where he played three years and continues to skate and train in the offseason.

"It's kind of a funny story, but I was actually really close to not even signing with the RINK," Hodnett laughed. "Most of my buddies were going to play for the Warriors AAA, so that was kind of what I was thinking I'd do. But it was the walk-around at the RINK and checking out the facility, that was what really drew my attention back. And after going through that tour, I was hooked. It really helped me figure out that this was going to be the best spot for development. Looking back, it was by far the best decision for me."

And what was it about the RINK that gave Hodnett so much excitement?

"It wasn't just one thing," he replied. "They treat you like you're playing junior hockey. I look at my schedule now with the Oil Kings and it's quite literally the same thing. I go to school and put in my work, and then you get your team stuff done in the afternoon. They don't just build hockey players there, they actually treat you like junior hockey or professional hockey players. They get you prepared for those situations where you get to junior and you're basically already comfortable with it. So, that helped me tremendously, just being able to jump into a situation with Edmonton and just being comfortable with it."

GAVIN SKATING AT WINNIPEG JETS DEVELOPMENT CAMP



"I also just look back to how much I've grown through the RINK's Testify program," he said. "Matty (Asmundson) showed me a couple of pictures of how small I looked Day 1, and just seeing how far I've come... it's pretty crazy. But honestly, Matty is great at what he does. All the numbers that he can pull, just building programs off of that and what players really need to work on, it's pretty incredible. That's why I've stuck with him for three or four years now."

For Hodnett, the biggest physical change came through his time spent training at the RINK. His biggest emotional change came through his success at the 2023 U-17 World Championship where he scored a point-per-game representing his country. But now, the biggest psychological change will be that of overcoming what he calls draft day "mistakes" and proving to 32 NHL clubs that he can be a productive and capable player at the world's highest level.



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BY JACOB STOLLER  
Photos by Dylan Asmundson

# LIKE NONE OTHER

**W**ithout hesitation, head coach Brad Purdie of RHA Winnipeg's U-15 program says this past year's group of players was the deepest he's ever had from top to bottom, overall.

For that reason, it was hard to watch as the team exited the year early. He felt they deserved better – but it was only fitting that eight players were selected in the 2024 WHL Prospects Draft.

“As a coach, you always want to see your players recognized for their hard work,” Purdie told *Game On*. “All the kids we had this year were really focused and dedicated.”

## GRAEME PICKERING

Graeme Pickering didn't have to wait long to hear his name called, as the Red Deer Rebels selected him 15th overall in the WHL Prospects Draft.

“If you got to know Graeme and hung around our team when he's coming from school, or in the dressing room before practice – he's very goofy. But whenever he walks through the front doors of that rink on game day, a switch would get flipped on and he'd be dialed like nobody else,” Purdie said.

Players like Pickering — right-shot defencemen with high-end puck skills — don't grow on trees. His elusiveness with the puck, his vision and ability to get shots through from the point are elite for someone his age. Pickering finished second in points (36) and third in power-play points (11) among

MADDEN TYMCHAK



all CSSHL U-15 defencemen this past season. He's not a one-trick pony, either.

“For someone that's labelled as an offensive defenceman, he's got a good stick and defends well,” Purdie said.

## MADDEN TYMCHAK

Madden Tymchak was selected in the third round (46th overall) by the Kamloops Blazers.

The six-foot defenceman is a punishing defender who strikes fear in opponents, recording the fifth-most penalty minutes of any defenceman in the country.

Purdie says that's largely due to a lot of calls coming from him hitting guys too hard – which won't happen at the next level.

“His physicality and the timing on his hits – especially his open ice hits – was second to none,” Purdie said. “If I were to try to compare him to someone, he's like a Brenden Dillon-type player to me. He's physical, can clear the front of the net, can make a good pass and contribute some offence.”

Tymchak scored just one goal during the 2023-24 season, however, he recorded the fourth-most assists of any defenceman in the league (29) this past season.

## KNOX BURTON

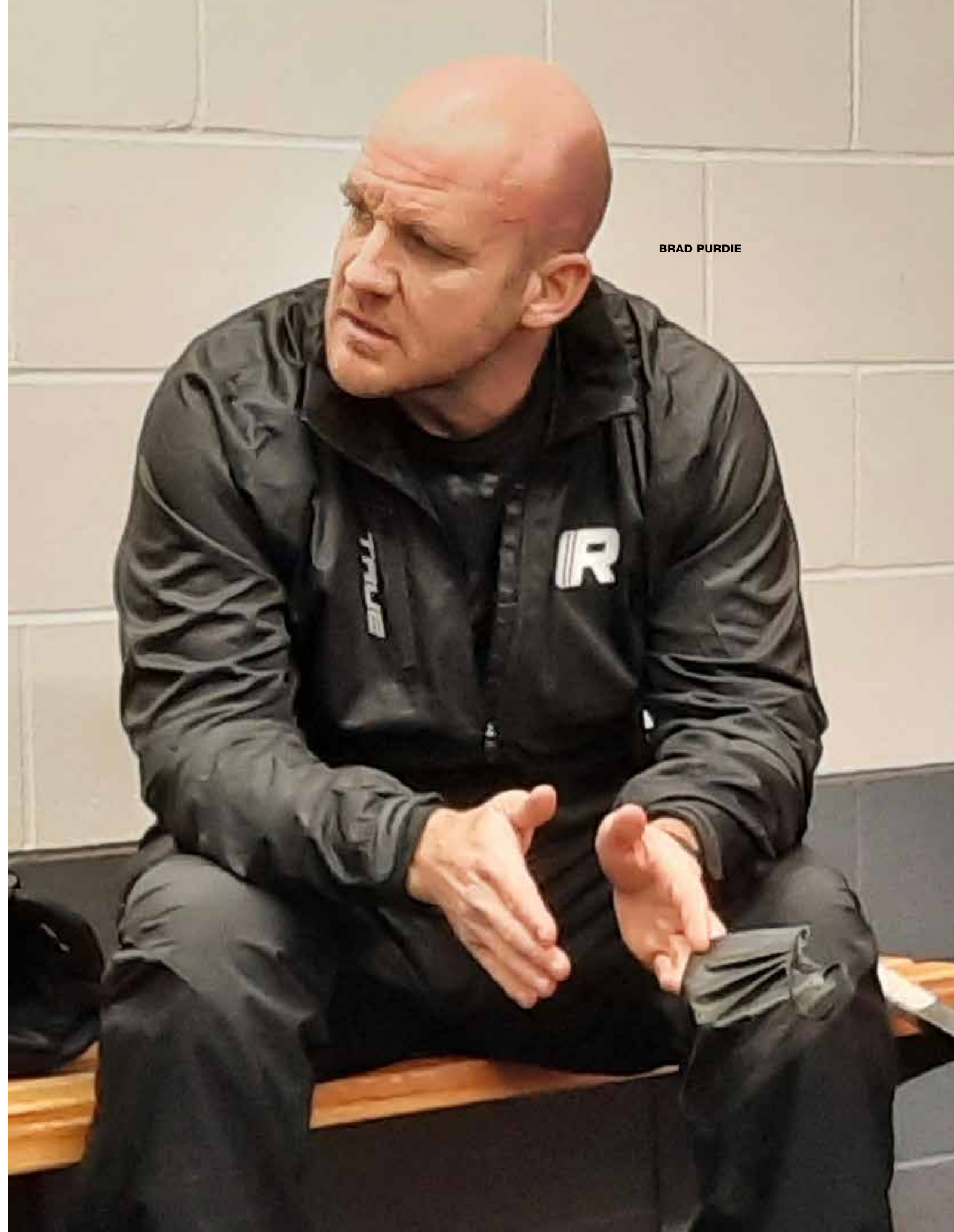
Knox Burton was selected in the fifth round (111th overall) by the Prince Albert Raiders. Listed officially as just 5-foot-11, Burton hit a growth spurt this year and shot up to 6-foot-1.

Burton recorded 33



GRAEME PICKERING

BRAD PURDIE







**DRAYDEN UHRINA**



**COHEN LEWKO**

points in 27 games with RHA — posting 17 of his markers in the final 11 games of the season.

“He started implementing a lot of the things we were preaching to him and working on in practice,” Purdie said. “It was like a lightbulb went off and from there, it really started building his confidence. He’s got a high ceiling.”

### **ANTHONY BEDARD**

Anthony Bedard demonstrates many of the same characteristics that the 18-year-old phenom for the Chicago Blackhawks does — It just so happens the two wear the same number and share a last name.

Purdie says he’s an offensive threat every time he touches the puck.

“He’s got tons of skill. He skates well and can score. He’s got really, really good hands around the net,” Purdie said.

The Spokane Chiefs drafted Bedard in the fifth round (96th overall). 12 of Bedard’s 18 goals on the year came during the final 13 games of the regular season.

### **DRAYDEN UHRINA**

Drayden Uhrina was drafted in the third round (53rd overall) by the Victoria Royals after recording a team-high 51 points in 25 games. When he’s on his game, the 6-foot skilled power forward demonstrates game-changing abilities.

“If you were going to ask anyone before the season, he probably would’ve been ranked in the first round, to be honest with you,” Purdie pointed out.

44 of Uhrina’s 51 points were scored at even-strength and his 1.76 even-strength points per game ranked second among all CSSHL U-15 skaters last season. While a lack of consistency from start to finish hindered his draft stock, Purdie believes slipping out of the first round could be a blessing in disguise for Uhrina.

“In the long run, it might just help him. He realizes what he has to do to get to the WHL. It’s not an easy thing to make the WHL and it’s probably even harder to stay in the WHL,” Purdie said.

### **SPENCER KUNTZ**

Spencer Kuntz was selected in the sixth round (133rd overall) by the Saskatoon Blades.

Kuntz is a right-shot defenceman who does a bit of everything and is endeared by his coaches.

“He’s ust an all-around beauty,” Purdie said.

Entering the year, Kuntz wasn’t a lock to be selected in the Prospects Draft, but he continuously improved as the season went on and his improved confidence shined in the postseason.

“Some guys come into the year thinking ‘I’m going to be drafted at this spot, or that spot.’ Spence isn’t that kind of kid,” Purdie said. “He just took advantage of everything the program had to offer and continuously got better throughout the year.”

### **COHEN LEWKO**

Cohen Lewko was selected in the fourth round (77th overall) by the Saskatoon Blades. Lewko is a prototypical power forward that may not wow you with his skill, but he’ll never be outworked.

“A lot of the scouts I talk to in the league, especially the older gentlemen, just love him. He’s a throwback — a 70s, 80s type of guy,” Purdie explained. “He’s a straight-line skater, he’s got a great shot. He’s physical.”

Lewko, who recorded 42 points in 26 games, was RHA Winnipeg’s captain this past season.

“He’s going to wear a letter in the WHL at some point,” Purdie said. “He’s just that kid that you hate to play against because he’s in your face, he finishes every check, skates well and can play centre or wing.”

### **NOLAN HARDING**

Nolan Harding was selected in the seventh round (141st overall) by the Victoria Royals.

Harding, who recorded 34 points in 27 games, is a good skater, with a solid frame and he possesses a great shot.

“He’s guy that can play up and down your lineup,” Purdie said. “He played a lot of centre for us, but I think he’ll be best suited as a big body on the wing. He uses his size to his advantage.”

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# A NEW WAY OF DOING HOCKEY

BY CARTER BROOKS  
Photos by Dylan Asmundson

For RINK Winnipeg's player development coordinator Jarrett Oster, the No. 1 biggest thing that any young hockey player can do to improve their hockey playing abilities is to spend time working on their skating. "The reality of it is, if you talk to any player, whether they're young or old, the first thing they're going to tell you is that they want to get faster," Oster told Game On. "A lot of good hockey players train a lot. So, they are usually pretty strong. But it's more of the deficiencies that tend to slow them down, right? So, we work with a lot of players that can get up to a fast rate of speed, but then slow themselves

down, sometimes because they're riding on their inside edge a little too much." Serving as the RINK's top power skating coach, Oster – once an SJHL star with the Yorkton Terriers – actually walked away from hockey for a good period of time, before finding himself drawn back to hockey as a form of work. His path to power skating coaching was far from ordinary. "After a couple serious injuries ended my Junior career, I took some time off of hockey, backing away from the game altogether," he shared. "But after a number of years, I really started to get itchy of being in the rinks again. You know, the cold, the smell of sweat, the exhaust fans... all that. As a matter of fact,

I actually started off as the Zamboni guy for a couple of years and worked in maintenance around the rinks. Obviously, I had a background in hockey and was able to jump in and help out when other instructors were hurt or sick. I guess they liked what they saw, and I began taking some coaching courses. As the story goes, here I am today." Now 44, Oster leads a number of different skating groups throughout the regular season and summer months, where he and fellow skating coaches Brooklyn Parker (figure skating) and Reece Derraugh (speed skating) instruct young hockey hopefuls looking to get an inside edge on their competition – pun most certainly intended.

**“IF YOU LOOK AT THE FASTEST SKATERS LIKE IN THE NHL, THEY ALL SKATE DIFFERENTLY”**



**ASK BROOKLYN PARKER.  
STICKERS ALWAYS WORK**



“Something that we focus on a lot at the RINK is edge engagement,” Oster said. “We want our kids to be able to find that edge as quick as possible. Just being able to get to that edge is really a big problem for some guys. And we also do a lot of work with guys on perfecting their flat – or their glide.

“If you look at the fastest skaters like in the NHL, they all skate differently, right? Nathan MacKinnon doesn’t skate like Connor McDavid, and McDavid doesn’t skate like anyone else. The one thing that those guys all have in common though is a tremendous glide. So, being able to get up to speed and maintain speed is something that we really focus on, especially with the junior guys out there.”

Having just finished an exceptionally successful nine-man summer speed series, Oster was blown away with the attentiveness of his students and their

overall willingness to learn and improve on the daily.

“It was an eight-week program with lots of power skating, and we had the perfect group to do it with,” he said. “To tell you the truth, over that whole time, we really only touched on about three topics. It was quickness out of your starts – so, some staggered starts, which is just a straight start. And then we focused on quickness out of a crossover start. And finally, quickness out of turns. So, those were basically our three topics that we rolled through this spring.

“A big focus for us is to lessen the topics, and go through them with more repetitions, especially at the higher levels,” Oster added. “And that’s across the board, even when we are working with the younger kids. In the winter power skating, I think we had seven or eight topics in a 19-week program. Anybody can just rip through topics. But it’s kind of gimmicky in

a certain way; just because you’re going through a bunch of different stuff, it doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re going to get faster. Again, the focus is less topics, more reps and really getting guys feeling comfortable in some of the more technical sides of things.”

Working alongside Oster is Parker and Derraugh, who have helped open not only his mind, but the minds of the majority of his power skating camp attendees to the importance of training with other skating disciplines.

“Brooklyn has been a huge part of what we’ve run with that added figure skating component the past two years together,” he said. “It’s got to be one of the best things we’ve added to the program and a whole different voice. It’s different, but I think it really shows hockey players just how far away we are from being great skaters, if that makes sense.

It makes me laugh every now and then, because the type of stuff she does – as basic as it seems – she’ll blow the hockey players out of the water, and man is it humbling. These guys are all 200-pound guys that live in the gym and they get waxed by her because of how efficient she is on her edges. And I love it. Nothing shows you more than that.”

RINK Winnipeg has also implemented a rudiments of speed skating aspect to its offerings, to which Derraugh has shined equally bright.

“So now there is a third component with speed skating,” he said. “Reece joined us from Speed Skating Manitoba and has made an impact right away. So, if a kid comes in wanting to get faster, why wouldn’t he or she take some knowledge from a speed skater who is trained? Much like Brooklyn and the figure skating, this is a whole different way of teaching and training, and I sure as heck wouldn’t have learned lots of what I know now without being out on the ice with people like that.”



**BROOKLYN PARKER PUTS HER YOUNG CHARGES THROUGH THEIR PACES**

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BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by Lucas Rotondo and courtesy Hubert Clarke

# IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME

## FOR MOST HOCKEY PARENTS, HUBERT CLARKE'S STORY WILL BE HARD TO BELIEVE.

In fact, Clarke's journey from Norway House Cree Nation to the Winnipeg Thrashers, to the Northern Alberta Xtreme, to the Youngstown Phantoms, to Western Michigan University is one of the most remarkable stories in the recent history of Canadian hockey.

While the physical and geographical journey itself is indeed a bit gobsmacking, the fact that Clarke has become a Team Manitoba and Canadian Sport School Hockey League star defenceman, a WHL and USHL draft pick, is currently in the camp of the USHL's

Youngstown Phantoms and will start a full-ride at WMU in the next few years, is another thing altogether.

That's because the 16-year-old Clarke, was a full-time goaltender until he was nearly 13 years old.

That's right, the gifted 6-foot-3, 190-pound defender is the antithesis to all the theories that kids must start playing the game at four or five, be recognized as a AAA star by the time they're 12 and give up all other sports to concentrate on hockey if they are ever going to reach their goals.

"Yes, it's quite amazing," said his family advisor Hayden Yaremko of Argonaut Hockey Group. "He was a goalie up in Norway House until about four years ago. He lost his father in 2021 and moved to Winnipeg that

**YOUNG HUBERT CLARKE THE GOALIE AT NORWAY HOUSE**

same year and tried out for the AAA U15 Thrashers. He made the team and after his first full season of hockey outside the house league in Norway House was one of the last picks in the WHL draft (Prince Albert Raiders).

"Since then, he has attracted interest from multiple USHL teams and NCAA schools and his late-2007 birthday almost puts him with the 2008s.



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It's a story like no other I've ever seen or heard."

Clarke was born and raised on Norway House Cree Nation and became a goalie at a young age. However, his team in the house league up north was so good, he wasn't getting many shots on goal. He was 12, he was bored, and he wanted to do a bit more for his team.

"I grew up on the Rez and the team we had in the little hockey league we had up there was so good, I never got any shots," said the former goaltender. "So, I said to my mom one day, 'Hey, I want to be a bigger part of the team and I want to skate around with my teammates.' So, for my next tournament, my mom actually got me player equipment and for some reason, I was just naturally good. I just stuck to it ever since."

Naturally good? Maybe. After all, he played his first game as a defenceman in a minor hockey tournament in the north at age 12 and in just three years, played two seasons of AAA with the Thrashers, a season of both U17 and U18 prep in the CSHL, is now in the camp of the USHL's Youngstown Phantoms and has already committed to an NCAA Division I school.



16 YEAR OLD HUBERT CLARKE (MIDDLE) ON THE TEAM MANITOBA BENCH

"My coach at Northern Alberta Xtreme, Jesse Dudas, knows Jared Brown, who is an assistant coach at Western Michigan," Clarke explained. "Western Michigan had asked about our team and Coach Jesse had said that most players wanted to go to the WHL, but I was one of the only players who was considering the NCAA route.

"We had an NCAA Showcase in Whitecourt, AB, and Jared came up from Western Michigan for that. He really liked what he saw, and he wanted me to be a Bronco. He gathered video of me for his staff and they all really liked me, so we continued the recruiting process, had a few meetings, and they offered me a scholarship. It

worked out really well." Last season, with the Xtreme, Clarke had nine goals and 39 points in 27 CSHL games as a U17 prep player, and four goals and six points in nine games as a U18 prep player.

For the last two seasons, he was also a star with Indigenous Team Manitoba at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships. He helped Manitoba win gold in 2023 and bronze in 2024; general manager Kevin Monkman is convinced he'll be a pro one day.

"He's a good athlete," said Monkman. "He plays high-level fastball back in his community and when you're a good athlete, you can do pretty much anything

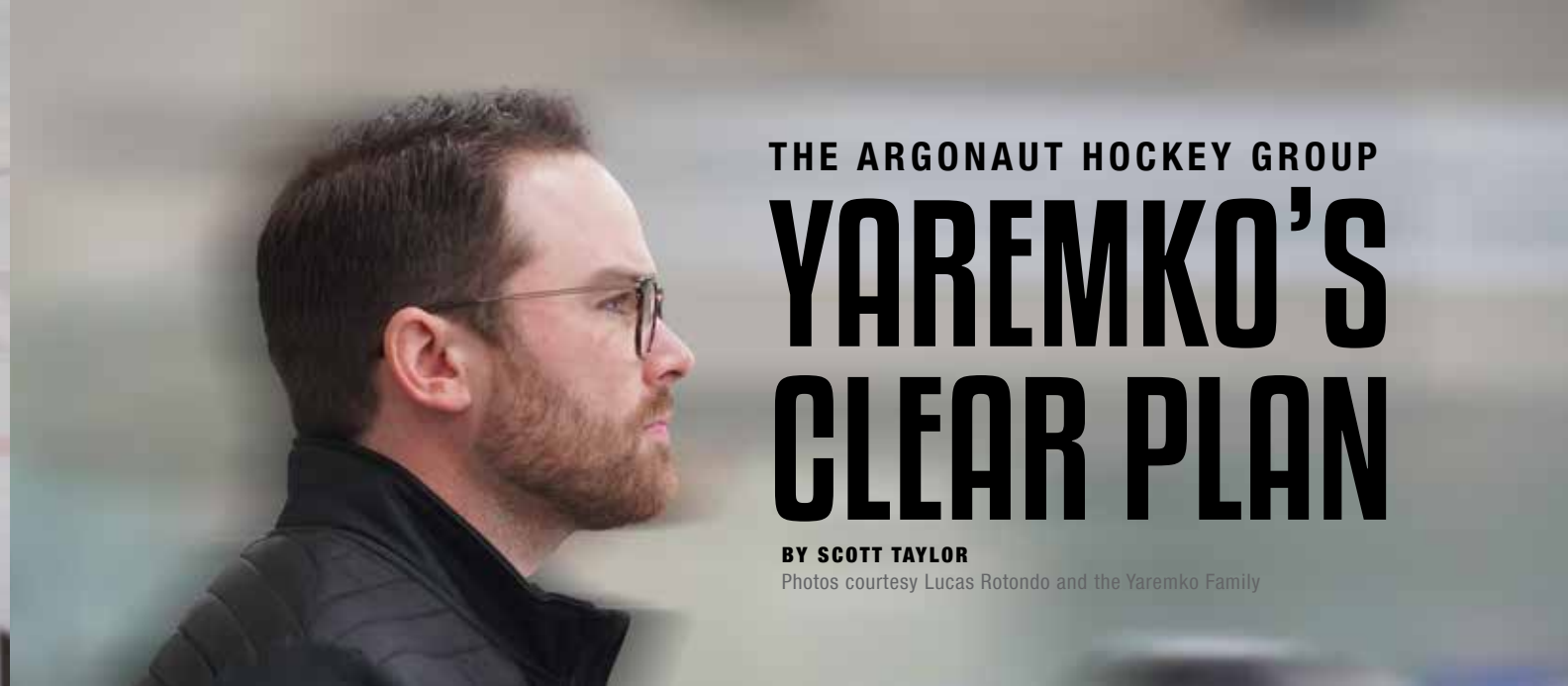
you want. He's all of 6-foot-3, 190. His size really helps as a defenceman and when you combine it with the fact he's a really good skater, you have a tremendous player.

"He's a very good teammate, too, a guy that players gravitate towards. He's just a really good kid who is well-liked. He has that Zach Whitecloud aura about him, but comparing him to where Zach was at 17, when I coached Zach, Hubie is well ahead of where Zach was and Hubie's only 16. He'll be a pro hockey player, it's just a matter of time."



**“HE WAS A GOALIE UP IN NORWAY HOUSE UNTIL ABOUT FOUR YEARS AGO”**

– HAYDEN YAREMKO



# THE ARGONAUT HOCKEY GROUP YAREMKO'S CLEAR PLAN

BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos courtesy Lucas Rotondo and the Yaremko Family

**T**he 27-year-old founder and president of the Argonaut Hockey Group has a clear plan – finish his law degree and become a National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA) Certified Agent.

"That seems pretty clear and direct on the surface," said Hayden Yaremko. "But I don't know if things always go that way in life, and it is not an easy path, but that is the goal. It's not going to be easy and will be something that takes time and persistence."

A proud citizen of the Red River Metis Nation, Hayden Yaremko is a bit of a Renaissance Man when it comes to the hockey community these days. A University of Manitoba law student who operates a family advisor firm for young hockey players, he's also an assistant coach with Indigenous Team Manitoba.

He's come a long way from his days growing up in The Pas.

"I started out in public skating, in Tiny Tots. My dad, Wayne, would take me. Obviously, my dad was a big influence in those early days. He always encouraged me to

work hard and stick with it. He still does, to this day, in life outside of hockey. Both of my parents have had a big influence on my life."

Yaremko played in The Pas until his second year of Bantam when he moved to regional team-play with the AAA Norman Wolves.

"That year, we played in various league showcases held in Winnipeg," he said. "That was the first time we started to experience more than just our regular tournaments, which were always held in Northern communities. That was really our first exposure to the high level of hockey in the province. After that, I went to Notre Dame (Wilcox, Sask.) and played there in my Grade 10 and 11 seasons."

He returned home for Grade 12 and started a three-year stint with the MJHL's OCN Blizzard. But he always had an adventurous side, so when he turned 20, he decided to leave again.

"I could have gone back to the Blizzard for my last year of Junior eligibility, but I wanted to start school," he said. "I knew it was going to be a long journey for me. I was

already planning to go to law school at the time and I knew that would be something that would take seven years."

He played the 2017-18 season at the University of Jamestown and loved it.

"It was a great place to continue playing hockey while at the same time start my university studies," he said. "The travel and the friendships are what I will remember forever."

These days, as planned, he's finishing his law degree at the U of M and running the Argonaut Hockey Group while living in Winnipeg.

"I founded Argonaut Hockey in the summer of 2022," he said. "It's all part of a vision, and a strategic plan. It has allowed me to hone my skills, build connections and a positive reputation, which will all, hopefully, set me up for success in the industry. I've always known I wanted to go to law school with my ultimate goal to become an NHLPA certified agent. Starting Argonaut was an important step in the process."

Argonaut Hockey now has over 20 players in the tent, including Hubert Clarke.

Yaremko, who emphasizes that when it comes to Argonaut Hockey, the relationship with his players and their families is foremost, personally advising all of them.

"It's just me, I do all of the day-to-day," he explained. "I have a couple of fellows who help me out with various tasks behind the scenes, but as day-to-day goes, I take care of it all and I take great pride in that."

"For me to bring on a new player and family, it has to be a good fit for both sides. I don't want to spread myself too thin and sacrifice the level of service that I can provide my players and the level of detail that my players deserve. I'm very happy with the direction things have gone thus far, and I'm excited for what the future holds."



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BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos courtesy Pilot Mound Hockey Academy

# OPTIMISM ALL AROUND

**C**oaches Ryan Carels and Rick McConnell know exactly what seals the deal for young hockey players when they visit Pilot Mound Hockey Academy.

After very good recruiting seasons, both coaches heralded the new dorms and the 46,000-square foot complex that houses the arena, curling rink and dormitories that make up PMHA.

“We recruited a lot of rural girls who have to billet somewhere,” said Carels, the head coach of the U18 female prep team. “When they came to Pilot Mound and saw the dorms, they just fell in love with the place. They loved what Pilot Mound has to offer. When you get into the rural areas of Saskatchewan and Alberta, they all know they have to move and billet if they want to get to a higher level - even their

AAA programs. The girls who visited here just felt that the dorm atmosphere we offer here is a lot more like a college experience and that will get them ready to move up again.”

McConnell, who coaches the male U17 prep team, concurred.

“It was tough to recruit during and after COVID and I won’t say it’s easy recruiting now, but our U17 team has had some success,” McConnell said. “The word is getting out there. Our dorm is beautiful, it’s a nice rink and the kids have their own dressing rooms. It has a small-town feel to it. Once we get players here to see everything, it’s pretty easy to get them to buy into what we have. Once they get out here, kids are really impressed with what Pilot Mound has to offer.”

After a few tough seasons for the Buffaloes, all four prep coaches are excited with what’s coming in the 2024-25 season.

*Game On* Magazine spoke with all of them and the outlook for the new season could not be more positive.

JACK PERRIER



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## U18 FEMALE BUFFALOES HEAD COACH: RYAN CARELS

"I think we'll be a strong contender," said Carels. "We'll be in every game this year. We have a lot of hard-working, good kids. Most of them have high expectations for themselves, for the upcoming season and for their hockey careers. We have a lot of ambitious players."

As mentioned, Coach Carels had a terrific recruiting year.

"It was a very successful recruiting year," he said. "We added a lot of Alberta girls who were looking for a good place. We only have five Manitoba girls. The Lethbridge-Red Deer area was good for us."

"We're going to be like the Florida Panthers this season," he continued. "There is not going to be an outstanding Connor McDavid-type of player. We have a well-rounded group of girls who will jell well. We have a lot of good kids from good families who will make a pretty good, well-rounded team."

### PLAYER TO WATCH

2 / HEIDI DANNERS  
D / 5'6" / 2007

Wawanesa, Man.

Third Year at PMHA

Games 29 / Goals 10 / Points 19

On Heidi: "A hard and dedicated worker on and off the ice. Led all defenders on the Buffaloes in every category including TOI in 2023-24."



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## U15 MALE BUFFALOES HEAD COACH: COLIN FAFARA

"I'm excited about this year's team," Coach Fafara said. "Last year, I came on late in the summer, so last year was a bit of a scramble. We had a good year in terms of player development. Our record wasn't great, but it was a lot of fun and a good learning experience for everyone. The kids got better and that was nice."

Because he arrived late last year, Fafara missed the recruiting season. He's excited to move forward with a new team in 24-25.

"I'm looking forward to this year because it's the first full season for me, in terms of recruiting and preparing a team and putting a roster together," he said. "We have some important pieces returning, like Gavin our goaltender. I'm well-aware of how good this league is and how strong the competition is, but we're really looking forward to the challenge and really being a competitive team."

"For me, personally, by being here now for a full season, I will have the chance to make sure the things I want to have squared away before the kids move in are all lined up on Day 1. Last year, was a little rushed. This year, we'll be better prepared."

Fafara said he has three outstanding players returning this season and having experienced players should automatically make his team better at the U15 level.

"I'm excited," he said. "Our three returning players, our goaltender, Gavin Hildebrand, our goalie; Cole Landreville, No. 9 from St. Claude, Man., who averaged more than a point-a-game in the CSSHL last year, which for a first-year player is very impressive and Maddux Ramage, as well. He's a kid from Pilot Mound, born and raised here, with a lot of pride. He really turned it on last in the season. Those kids should make a big impact for us this season."

### PLAYER TO WATCH

37 / GAVIN HILDEBRAND  
G / 5'10" / 2010

Morden Man.

Second Year at PMHA

Games 17 / GAA 5.50  
/ SAVE PCT. .873

On Gavin: "He's an honour student and multi-sport athlete. Gavin is a special kid and we're fortunate to have him."



## U17 MALE BUFFALOES HEAD COACH: RICK MCCONNELL

Rick McConnell is from Pilot Mound and is the longest tenured head coach in the program. He's enjoyed a championship and suffered through some rocky times. So, when he says he's excited about the upcoming season and the team he'll put on the ice, believe him.

"I'm excited about the group I have coming in," said McConnell. "I have five returners from last year from my own team and a couple from the U15s who are coming up, so I'm encouraged. I know the league is tough and we'll be playing in the top half so we'll have our work cut out for us, but I'm excited about the group I'm bringing in."

As mentioned already, he had a solid recruiting year.

"It was a really good recruiting year," McConnell said with a smile. "I had my team filled a good two months ago and that was encouraging. I had some big holes to fill. I had a couple of pretty high-end players last year that have moved up so I don't know if I can replace that level of play, but I have

a pretty good bunch that will be great to work with."

He also has a couple of outstanding players returning to the fold for the 2024-25 season as well as young players from all over the globe.

"Yeah, we have a couple of key guys coming back – Jack Perrier and Brody Wytinck," said Coach McConnell. "I'm quite excited with all the prospects I've brought in. We have kids coming from Switzerland, Denmark, all over the place. It's exciting."

### PLAYER TO WATCH

17 / JACK PERRIER  
F / 5'11" / 2008

Darlingford, Man.

Third Year at PMHA

Games 39 / Goals 13 / Points 33

On Jack: "Last year was a big leap, often to first-line status. He has developed a goal-scoring touch, plays on the power play and penalty kill and is learning the tough side for the 200-foot game."

## U18 MALE BUFFALOES HEAD COACH: ANTHONY FLORENTINO

Anthony Florentino, the former pro player who is now head coach of the Buffaloes U18 prep team wanted no part of a discussion about the upcoming 2024-25 season.

"I'm going to be as secretive as possible," said Florentino. "I think we're going to surprise a lot of people. I really like our team, and I think a big addition is Tyler Dixon our new assistant coach. He's been incredible so far and I'm very grateful to have him."

"From a team aspect, I like what we've got. I think it's going to be a good year. We had a good year recruiting as a collective staff. It was a

team effort. I wouldn't have been able to do it without the people at Pilot Mound – Isaa Friesen, Nichole (Collins), Danny (Carels). From top to bottom it was a team effort."

### PLAYER TO WATCH

17 / AUSTIN POLONOSKI  
F / 6'2" / 2007

Thunder Bay, Ont.

Second Year at PMHA

Games 52 / Goals 14 / Points 41

On Austin: "A good student, dedicated hard worker on and off the ice."



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# COME FROM AWAY

**BY SCOTT TAYLOR**  
Photos by James Carey Lauder and courtesy Balmoral Hall School

**LUCIE VELINSKA, CZECHIA**

**D**uring its 15-year history as a major Prep power in female hockey, the Balmoral Hall Blazers have primarily been a showcase for players developed in Manitoba.

However, as more and more sports schools with college prep hockey teams pop up around the country, coaches have to be more diligent when it comes to finding the top-quality athletes who can compete at the highest level of the game in this country.

This year, the Blazers will become a “national team.” Granted, the school’s hockey roster will still be made up mostly by local stars. But for the 2023-24 season, the team’s first in the Canadian Sport School Hockey League, a significant number of team members will come to Manitoba from other parts of Canada.

“We have an eclectic group from across Canada,” head coach Sarah Zacharias said recently. “We’re a coast-to-coast team this year. We have girls from B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Maritimes and two players from Newfoundland. We even have our returning player from Czechia back this season. We’re a mixed bag of players from all over the world and we’re really excited about having all these girls come to the centre of Canada.”

One of the most exciting players back in the lineup is Czech U18 National Team player Lucie Velinska

from Nova Role, Czechia. Assistant coach Regan Boulton, who was just awarded Manitoba’s 2024 BFL Canada Female Competitive Coach of the Year by Hockey Canada, is proud of Lucie’s success internationally.

“Lucie won a Silver Medal with Team Czechia at the U18 Women’s World Hockey Championships in Switzerland in January,” said Boulton. “Lucie Represented Team Czechia so well and played a significant role in the historical win. It marked the first time in the history of U18 Czechia Women’s National Team that they won a silver, and we are so proud of Lucie and her team’s success.”

“Czechia also had not medalled in U18 World Championships since the team won Bronze in 2014, so it was fitting that on the 10-year anniversary of that win, they captured the Silver. It was incredible watching Lucie throughout the tournament -- especially in the final game -- and then it was wonderful welcoming her home. I will never forget when she brought the medal into our office for us to see, her smile was ear-to-ear and we all knew how much it meant to her.”

For many schools in the CSSHL, recruiting from across the country – and even the

**LUCIE VELINSKA SHOOTS AGAINST CANADA IN THE WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP**

world -- has become a big part of their programs. In the case of the Blazers, however, name recognition combined with its reputation as one of the best programs – both athletically and academically – in Canada, has created a situation in which high-level players like Velinska are actually asking to come to BH.

“We didn’t do very much recruiting,” Zacharias admitted. “We’ve been pretty fortunate these last few seasons, getting a lot of inquiries about our program. When I first started, we weren’t getting the number of families reaching out to us that we are now. Now, we get anywhere from 40-50 families a year reaching out to ask about the program, asking if there’s a spot on the team for their girl. Our job has been to do our due diligence, watching videos, watching them play if we ever get a chance to see them play live and then making our choices. That’s how we ended up with all these kids from all over Canada this year. It was them reaching out to us.”

“And it speaks volumes as to how our team is doing as well. We’re being

noticed across the country. Families from across Canada are now hearing about the Blazers and the kind of hockey program and educational opportunities we offer here.”

For Zacharias, playing the CSSHL will bring an added dimension to the team’s national reputation.

“It’s only going to get more exciting as we get into the CSSHL,” said the coach. “When I got back from the AGM, the first thing I noticed is that it’s a very well-run league. I’m excited about the people on the board and excited about my fellow coaches. The CSSHL is a well-oiled machine.”

“And what really impressed me, came early in the AGM,” Coach Zach added. “They started the meeting by saying, ‘If we make decisions as a business we’ll suffer, but if we make decisions based on the most important thing – the players and their safety and what’s best for them. If we do that first, then we’ll be successful as a league. That echoes what we’re already doing at BH, so we’re really on the same page with the CSSHL’s product.”

“It’s going to be an exciting year for us.”







BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by James Carey Lauder and courtesy Sarah Zacharias

# A PROGRESSIVE STRATEGY



HEAD COACH  
SARAH ZACHARIAS

**BALMORAL HALL SCHOOL** has agreed to do something for its hockey coach that will not only balance Sarah Zacharias' life, but will also serve as an example of BH's position as progressive and invigorating workplace for its female staff.

Zacharias, who has just come off maternity leave to return to her role as head coach and Director of Hockey at BH, will be allowed a support person on road trips this season.

It doesn't sound like a big sacrifice for the school, but it is a big step for employers of travelling female professionals in any workplace.

"BH is providing me a situation that will ensure I can maintain work/life balance, leading the team as Director of Hockey and raising a young family," Zacharias explained. "The school is allowing me to bring a support person to travel weekends

so I can continue to nurse my son Jack and have him with me on the four to five-day travel weekends.

"I think this speaks to the school's progressive outlook on women in the workforce and aligns with what we're starting to see across the NCAA. I'm not sure if there are other female coaches in Manitoba who have done the same thing, but if we are breaking ground here, I want that to be shared so someone else down the road can see there's a precedent for this type of situation."

This season, as the Blazers leave the US-based Junior Women's Hockey League and join the Canadian Sport School Hockey League, Balmoral Hall will allow its head hockey coach to bring along a support person – her husband Jay Campbell or her mother or mother-in-law – to take care of Jack while Zacharias does her job.

"Yes, it will be my husband, my mom or my mother-in-law, Jack's

grandmas, depending on their schedules," Coach Zach explained. "Those are three people lined up to come. They'll keep an eye on Jack during games while I'm dealing with the team's business, as coaches always do.

"It's awesome that I'll be able to bring Jack along with me. There is evidence of this happening in the NCAA already. A few years ago, head coach Erin Hamlen at Merrimack and Cass Turner, the well-known coach at Quinnipiac, did this. They had their kids, went on mat leave and came back to work and were able to bring their babies on the road so they could nurse and spend more time with their family.

"I'd seen it in the NCAA and by talking about it to those other moms who are coaches to see what they went through to make their arrangements with their schools, they all said, 'Go and ask. What's the harm in asking?' So, I asked our school and they were absolutely over the moon with excitement about the idea. They didn't even bat an eyelash at my request.

"I think it speaks to how progressive BH is and being at an all-girls school with a senior management team of females across the board, I think they all understood what this meant to me and to the school."

Zacharias had nothing



BALMORAL HALL BLAZERS HEAD COACH SARAH ZACHARIAS WITH YOUNG JACK CAMPBELL AND ASSISTANT COACHES KELSEY MCHOLM AND REGAN BOULTON



JACK CAMPBELL

but respect for her employers at BH before making her request for a family road-trip assistant. Even that high-level of respect has risen since the school's decision.

"On a personal note, this means so much to me," she said. "The support they're showing me, backing my wish to do two things simultaneously that I think a lot of women previously considered to be impossible, makes me very grateful. And I'm very excited about it. Hopefully, another mom, seeing this, says, 'Why can't I ask for this, too?' This is a precedent and I believe there will be more down the road, hopefully."



BY CARTER BROOKS, WITH  
FILES FROM BEN LITTLE  
Photos courtesy Hockey Canada  
Images and Tammy Stewner/  
Balmoral Hall

# DONNING THE MAPLE LEAF

Once again, the Canadian National Women's Under-18 Team included a Manitoban flavour in its 2024 makeup.

For the second-straight year, Sara Manness joined the squad for Canada's three-game mini-series with the United States in mid-August from Canada Games Park in Ontario, while Hayley McDonald also earned one of the 23 roster spots.

Manness, who got her start with the Balmoral Hall Blazers, was the youngest member of the Canadian team at the 2024 IIHF Women's World

U18 Championship, and has spent the past year with the Burlington Jr. Barracudas of the OWHA U22 Elite League. The La Salle product was one of the league's three 100-point players, and did so in just 39 games played. Manness was the MVP of last year's Women's U18 National Championship, where she registered five goals and nine points in five outings. She is set to join Clarkson



# RED RIVER RISING

THE SPORTS MAGAZINE  
OF THE RED RIVER MÉTIS

## COVER

DANIEL  
CHARTRAND  
Still living the dream

## INSIDE

DANA  
GOERTZEN  
Former Team Manitoba  
captain a star at U of M

AN OFFICIAL SPORTS PUBLICATION OF

# GAMEON







DANIEL CHARTRAND AND A YOUNG FAN IN PORT HURON

BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos courtesy Daniel Chartrand/Northland College/Port Huron Prowlers



# The Scouts Know You're There

When Daniel Chartrand finished his final game with the Swan Valley Stampeders in 2018, he figured his hockey career was over.

Then came the phone call. When he played his final game at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin in 2022, he figured his hockey career was over.

Then came the phone call.

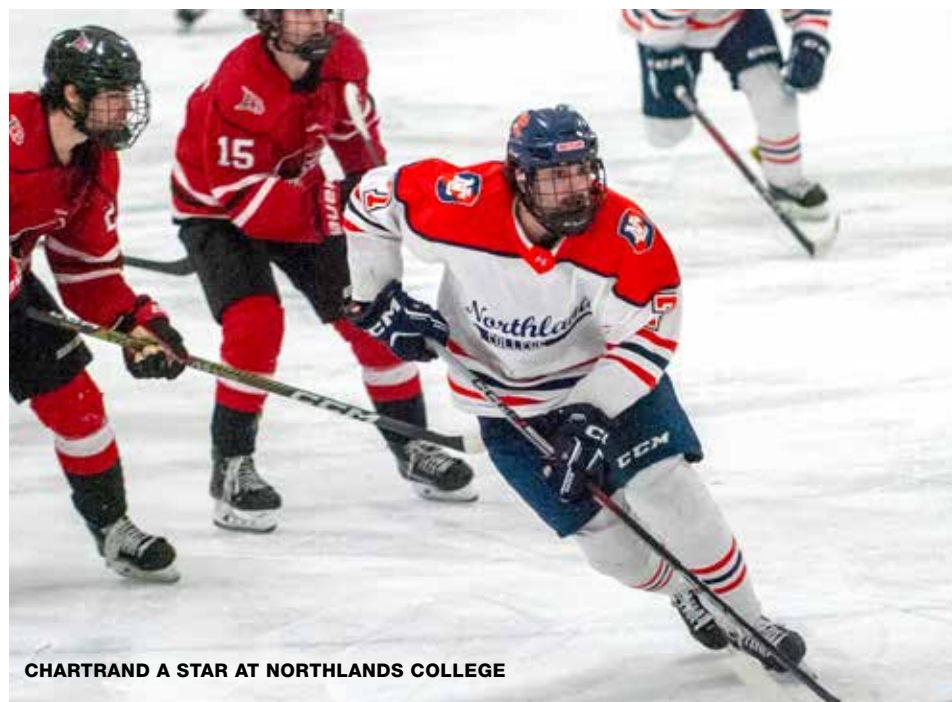
Now 26, Daniel Chartrand is getting paid to play hockey. Not bad for a guy who didn't think he'd be playing anything but weekend Aboriginal tournaments after his final game in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League.

"When I played my final game with the Stampeders, I really thought I'd be going back to work at the wood mill in Swan River," he said with a laugh. "But then, I got a call from Seamus Gregory, the hockey coach at Northland College. My mom had been all over



DANIEL CHARTRAND PLAYING PROFESSIONALLY WITH THE PORT HURON PROWLERS





CHARTRAND A STAR AT NORTHLANDS COLLEGE

me, saying, 'You're going to university! You're going to university! And when the call came to play college hockey in the States, I said, 'Sure.' I had a great four years there.

"But when it ended, I thought my hockey days were over. Then, out of the blue, I got a call from the Port Huron team in the Federal Prospects League. I had no idea they even knew who I was. I mean, I was a little shocked. But they knew me. I still have trouble believing it. Now, I'm heading into my third year in Port Huron."

An immensely proud citizen of the Red River Metis Nation, Chartrand has come a long way from his days growing up in Duck Bay and Dauphin.

During his three full seasons in the MJHL with Dauphin, OCN and Swan Valley, he had 34 goals and 82 points in 156 games. In four years of NCAA Division

III at Northland College, he had eight goals and 16 points in 70 games. And now, in two years with the Port Huron Prowlers of the FPHL, he's notched 15 goals and 44 points in 94 games.

Pretty good for a kid who didn't even like skating when he was first laced up the blades.

"I probably started skating in Dauphin when I was around three or four, but I hated it," he said. "I hated the cold, my feet would hurt, but after going so many times, getting pushed my dad, I came around to it."

"My family moved to Dauphin when I was two years old and even though I hated skating, I would always watch hockey with my dad. I remember watching an NCAA D-1 game and they were wearing cages and I said, 'Hey, I could do that.' And my dad said, 'Well, yeah, you can but you have to play

hockey.' So, at six, I started playing organized hockey and my goal was only to play NCAA hockey. Not even the NHL. I just wanted to play NCAA hockey. That's what started the hockey passion in me. That and my dad."

Chartrand is originally from Duck Bay, just like his uncle David, the president of the Red River Metis Nation. He spent most of his summers there while his mom and uncle "worked 24/7, 365."

"I would go back to Duck Bay and the spend the summers at my grandma's house with all my cousins," he recalled. "It was a good time and I really started getting into sports."

"Once we got settled in Dauphin, I started to see more doors open," he recalled. "At that point it was pretty much hockey 24/7. I played all my minor hockey in Dauphin and played for Parkland for two years of

U18. I also played high school hockey for the DRCSS Clippers and we made it to the finals. That was one of the most memorable years of my hockey experience. We had such a tight-knit group of great people. We got all the way to the finals and lost to Crocus Plains. It was heartbreaking, but I'm still friends with a lot of the guys on that team."

Chartrand spent the summer running hockey camps across Manitoba for the Manitoba Aboriginal Sports & Recreation Council. He's always been close to the MASRC because of his years with Team Manitoba at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championship. In fact, he played three seasons for Team Manitoba -- 2013 for head coach Ryan Cook and 2014 and 2015 for Kevin Monkman. It has become such a big part of his life that he's volunteered as an assistant coach in every tournament from 2018 to 2023. He missed this past season's tournament because his Prowlers were in the Federal League playoffs.

"I loved the NAHC, travelling across Canada to play and coach," he said. "Travelling has been a big part of hockey for me. I've been going across Canada and into the United States to play since I was 12 or 13. It's interesting that even though you might not know that the scouts know you, if you've been out there getting your name in front of people all your life, hoping to get a break in hockey, you will get that break, that phone call, because believe me, if you've put your name out there, they know who you are."



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# Métis Sports & Youth





BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by James Carey Lauder and Dave Mahussier

# A Heritage Journey

Although Dana Goertzen will admit she loves her time playing hockey at the University of Manitoba, she will concede that the thought of playing NCAA Division-I does cross her mind from time to time.

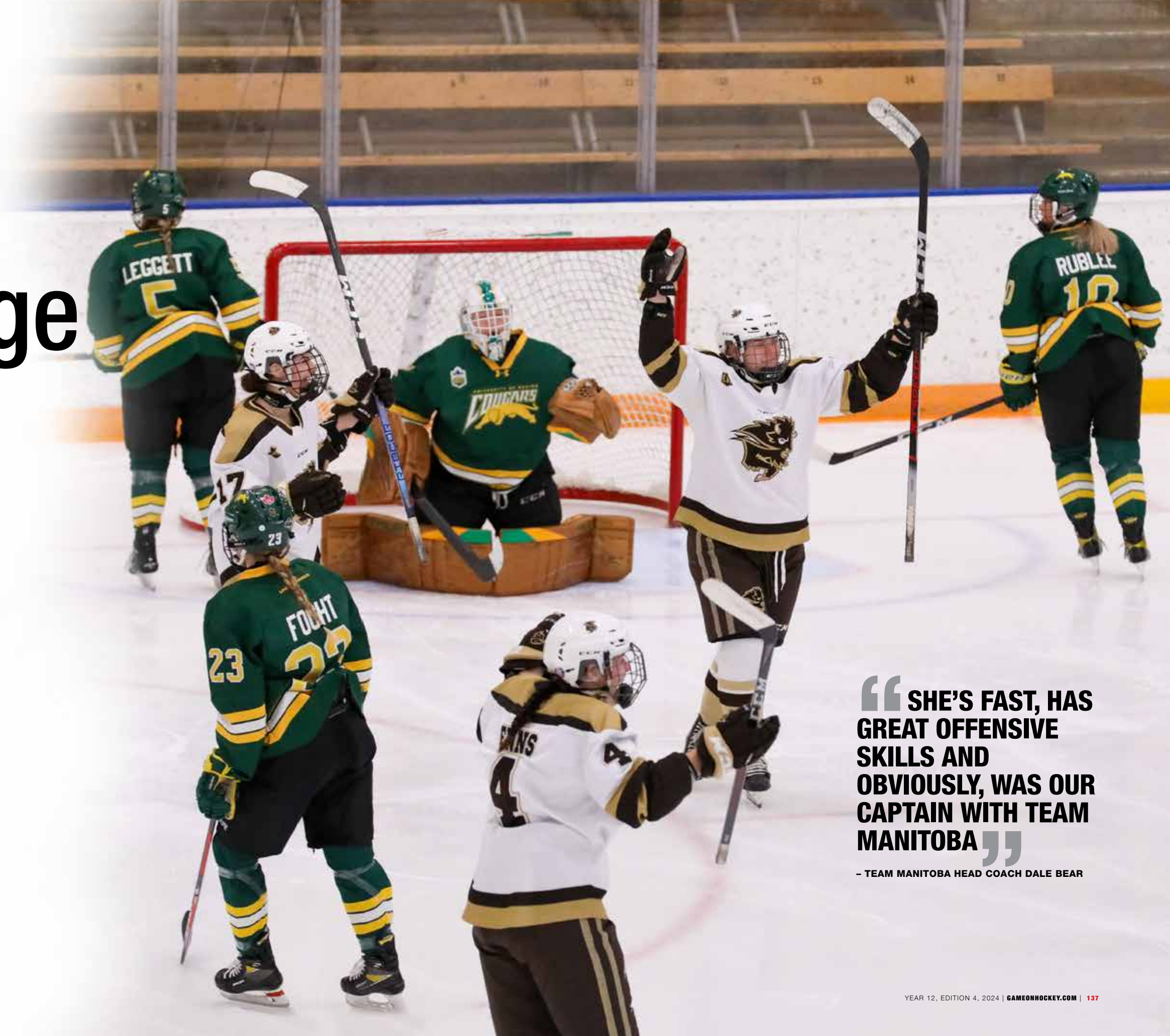
Goertzen – the Red River Metis Nation star who was named to four female Aboriginal Team Manitoba squads, missed two tournaments because of the COVID cancellations and yet still won a silver medal and gold medal in the two events that were played – had her choice of a number of schools when she graduated from Winnipeg’s Balmoral Hall School in 2022.

She chose the U of M because she wanted to stay home to play the game she loves, but now says that upon graduation, a shot at playing pro hockey in Europe is at the top of her list of things to do.

“I’m really liking the U of M,” she said. “But some days I wish I’d moved away just to get that experience. Growing up, playing at BH, that’s all I ever saw – girls going away and playing their four or five years in a different province or in a city down in the States, so, I was kind of looking forward to that, but I’m happy with the decision I made to stay home.

“When I graduated from BH, I just couldn’t see myself playing anywhere else. I’ve always liked the Bisons. Other schools just didn’t feel right. I didn’t want to move away from home and I didn’t see myself wearing any other jersey but the Brown and Gold. I got plenty of NCAA Division 1 offers, but for me, the Bisons were the best choice.

“I’ll play my five years at the U of M, but lately I’ve been thinking about going away to



“ SHE’S FAST, HAS GREAT OFFENSIVE SKILLS AND OBVIOUSLY, WAS OUR CAPTAIN WITH TEAM MANITOBA ”

– TEAM MANITOBA HEAD COACH DALE BEAR





**CAPTAIN DANA GOERTZEN ON A BREAKAWAY WITH TEAM MANITOBA**

play in Europe for a year or two, just to get that experience away from home. We went to Europe a couple of summers ago and it was really nice. I have nothing but good things to say about Europe. So, I'm looking into it, but I still have three more years to play at the U of M."

It's hard to imagine a better player than Goertzen, someone Team Manitoba head coach Dale Bear called, "a leader in every sense of the word."

"She's fast, has great offensive skills and obviously, was our captain with Team Manitoba," Bear added. "All the players looked up to her. She has great leadership qualities."

Not surprisingly, Goertzen believes that playing for Team Manitoba at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championship was about

as much fun as a hockey player could possibly have.

Although a star at Balmoral Hall who helped BH win the 2019 Junior Women's Hockey League, Goertzen loved her chance to win silver in Whitehorse in 2019, but was even more excited about winning gold with her sister at Membertou in 2022.

"I loved every minute of my experiences at the NAHC," Dana said enthusiastically. "It was probably one of my favourite weeks with a hockey team. Especially going up north and playing in Yukon. I'd never been that far away from home before. The scenery was amazing. And the group of girls that were there was great. The coaches were amazing. It was so much fun. I was really excited about going again."

Unfortunately, she had to wait three more years before she got her second

opportunity. COVID shut down the 2020 and 2021 championships, but in 2022, she got to go to Membertou with her younger sister, Jenna.

"Our gold medal game in Nova Scotia is still my favourite game of all time. I got to play that game with my sister, Jenna. She was the goaltender that year and no one has let me forget how I skated to her after that game. I was like running on ice. I'll never forget that feeling I had when we hugged at the blueline. It was just the greatest feeling. We just loved playing together."

As good as Dana has become, it's interesting to note that she started hockey a bit later than most young women who become successful.

"I started playing hockey when I was seven," she explained. "Before that, I was enrolled in dance, gymnastics

and soccer so, I felt I had a pretty good athletic base when I was ready to try something new. And that's the reason I started playing hockey. I just wanted to get into something new.

"I had heard on the radio that the Jets were coming back and I'd heard a bit about ice hockey before that so, I thought, 'Might as well try it.' At first, I was like Bambi on ice, but after a while I sort of got the hang of it."

Goertzen played for the Stars and Saints organizations at Notre Dame Arena. Then, in Grade 6, she tried out for AA and played for the AA Saints while in Grades 6, 7 and 8. In Grade 9, she accepted an offer from head coach Sarah Zacharias to play high-level international Prep School hockey for Balmoral Hall.

"I was really nervous when I got to Bal because I started out playing with Olivia Cvar, who became an NCAA star at St. Cloud State University," Dane recalled. "Coach Zach (Sarah Zacharias) put me right on her line in the first week of practices and I was nervous and scared. But after a while I adapted. I've always liked the challenge of playing up with the older girls because they made me work harder than I felt I needed to. It was a lot more fun."

Her decision to attend the University of Manitoba was something that appeared to be etched in stone years ago.

"She has been family friends with the (U of M Coach Jon and his family) Rempels for a long, long time," Coach Zacharias said. "She and Jon's daughter Maren are close friends. She was a big part of the Bisons Junior program, and I always knew it was going to be hard to get her to even consider going somewhere else. She was going to play for the Bisons ever since she got to BH."

She just completed her second season at the U of M and will quite openly admit that while she wants to one day become a police officer, she is more committed to her hockey experience than her studies.

"Career-wise, my first option is that I'll always want to be a police officer, but I don't need school to be a police officer," she said. "I'm taking criminal justice and criminology courses, but as a backup option, in case I don't get on to the force – it's hit or miss -- I'm looking into education. If becoming a police officer



**BH HEAD COACH SARAH ZACHARIAS WITH CAPTAIN DANA GOERTZEN AND ASSISTANT COACH REGAN BOULTON**

doesn't work out, I'll have education as a backup option."

If nothing else, her NAHC and university experiences have opened her eyes to embracing her Indigenous heritage. Her great-grandmother was Red River Metis and in recent years, her family has become more aware of the things that make up their Metis heritage.

"My mom's dad's mom is Metis and so growing up, we always talked about the culture of the Metis people," she said. "However, it wasn't until Grade 9, my first year of NAHC that I realized how important it was to me. I learned how to embrace it and I learned so much from it. At NAHC, it's not just about playing hockey. You get to learn about your heritage

and take in the culture. Ever since Grade 9, in most of my school projects, I've taken the opportunity to teach others about our Metis heritage.

"Now, it's one of my favourite parts about school. I take one Indigenous Studies course per semester. I've learned about the origins of the culture and our history. It's pretty neat."





# NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE RED RIVER MÉTIS

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BY CARTER BROOKS

Photo courtesy of the Swift Current Broncos

# RED, WHITE AND GOLD

Winnipeg's **Peyton Kettles** and the 21 other young men making up the Canadian U18 hockey program are golden once again.



In early-August, Kettles and Team Canada defeated Czechia 2-1 on home soil in the gold medal game of the Hlinka-Gretzky Cup. It marked Canada's third-straight championship win, which was accomplished by a sparkling 5-0 record and a lopsided +19 goal-differential in the annual showcase. The Canadians earned a berth in the gold medal game by beating rival United States 5-1 in the semifinal, before taking care of business against their fellow 4-0 Czechians.

"It was truly an honour to play

for Team Canada and win gold at the Hlinka-Gretzky Cup," Kettles told Game On. "Not only did I get to represent our country but also the province of Manitoba as well. We had a great group of guys who worked extremely hard and had a lot of fun both on and off the ice."

Kettles – the hulking 6-foot-5, 195-pound defenceman – scored a goal in Canada's 10-0 opening game triumph over Switzerland, while helping shut down the opposition on the back-end all tournament

long. Turning 17 in September, the right-shooting defender is eligible for the 2025 NHL Draft and will continue honing his craft with the WHL's Swift Current Broncos this season. Last year he scored twice while posting 13 points, 44 penalty minutes and a +19 rating in 61 games.

Spending two full seasons learning the tricks of the trade at RINK Winnipeg, Kettles' experience at the U15 and U18 levels helped catapult his aspirations of a gold medal into a reality this summer.





MASRC.COM

# A COUPLE OF SMOKEY BRONZE MEDALS

BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by James Carey Lauder, Lucas Rotondo and Nick Lacoste

For Kevin Monkman and Dale Bear, it's one thing to come home from the National Aboriginal Hockey Championship with a bronze medal. It's another thing entirely to come home with a bronze medal because two third-place games were cancelled due to smoke.

"We lost the semifinal in double overtime," explained Team Manitoba Men's manager Kevin Monkman. "The competitive side of me was disappointed that we didn't get a bronze-medal game. As an individual, you want to play those games, but you also have to think about the safety side of it, as well. When I left for the coaches meeting that morning, the smoke was so thick that you couldn't see the street lights from half-a-block down the street."

While the play on the ice

was first rate, the forest fires in early May in Northern Alberta were both stifling and uncomfortable. Manitoba finished the women's round-robin portion of the tournament in third place with a record of 3-1-0 while the men went undefeated at 4-0-0 but were placed second to B.C. by goal differential.

The women lost their semifinal 3-2 to second-place Alberta in triple overtime while the men lost their semifinal 4-3 to third-place Ontario in double overtime. While Ontario beat Alberta 3-0 in the women's gold medal game and Ontario beat Saskatchewan 4-0 in the men's championship final, neither of Manitoba's two teams got to play a bronze medal game due to the smoky conditions in Grand Prairie. In fact, the forest fires in Northern Alberta got so bad, the

smoke even filled the arena.

"We had the meeting that morning and went to the rink and there was not only a haze inside the arena, but you could really smell it," Monkman said. "You could even taste it. So, in the end, we were disappointed not to be able to play, but the safety of the players was more important. B.C. had a couple of players with asthma and we had a couple of guys with allergies, so it wasn't right to have kids get sick. The players actually took warmup and complained that their eyes were burning and their throats and chest were hurting just from inhaling the smoke. At first, we thought we could postpone the games but then, after a couple of hours, we all decided not to play the bronze medal games for our players' safety."

The ultimate decision to cancel the bronze medal



MARLEN EDWARDS

RACHEL HALLDORSON

AYDEN COLLINS

JESSICA ANDERSON

TEAM MANITOBA FEMALE  
HEAD COACH DALE BEAR





## FEMALE TEAM MANITOBA 2024 NATIONAL BRONZE MEDALISTS

1. RACHEL HALLDORSON	G	MMF Interlake Region
2. LIBERTY AIME	F	MMF Interlake Region
3. KAI HYATT	D	MMF Winnipeg Region
4. SELENE WOZNEY	F	Fort Alexander First Nation
5. BRE-ANN WINDROSS	F	MMF Southwest Region
6. DEVYN BROWN	D	MMF Winnipeg Region
7. REESE SCHUTTE	F	MMF Southwest Region
8. KIRBY GRAY	D	MMF Southwest Region
9. RIO PIERRE	F	Roseau River First Nation
10. LINNEA MISNER	D	MMF Southwest Region
11. GINGER FAST	F	MMF Southwest Region
12. SEANNA PRICE	F	MMF Winnipeg Region
13. ADDISON DYCK	D	MMF Winnipeg Region
15. BREIGH RANK	F	MMF Southwest Region
16. SOPHIE THOMPSON	D	Pine Creek First Nation
17. HALEY BRAUN	F	Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
18. KURTIA YETMAN	D	Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
19. JESSICA ANDERSON	F	MMF Southwest Region
23. BRAYA KAPUSTA	F	MMF Winnipeg Region
25. CHEYENNE SCOTT-COOKE	F	Peguis First Nation
26. PAYTON CHORNLEY	F	MMF Southwest Region
31. NATALIE RAMPTON	G	MMF Southwest Region
35. OREANNA KENNEDY	G	Bloodvein First Nation

Head Coach: **DALE BEAR** Peguis First Nation  
 Assistant Coach: **KEYANNA LEA** Berens River First Nation  
 Assistant Coach: **KATIE BASSETT** MMF Winnipeg Region  
 Manager: **JACINTA BEAR** Fisher River First Nation  
 Trainer: **CHRISTINA KEEPER** Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation  
 General Manager: **ROBYN CRUZ** MMF Winnipeg Region

games disappointed the women, as well. Although Coach Bear admitted that it didn't take long to get over it.

"So, us and B.C. were supposed to play for bronze but because they couldn't play the game, both teams would be awarded bronze," said Bears. "I know the girls were upset they couldn't play for a 'real' bronze, especially the vets who didn't want to go out that way, but they got over it pretty quickly."

Ultimately, both coaches were pleased with their teams' performances.

"Yes, I was pleased," said Monkman. "I come back pleased every year from that tournament. The calibre of play is better every year. It was so good, five teams could have won gold there. That's how good the calibre of play is and the quality of the teams are. We had a good roster and we matched every team in the tournament. It just goes to show that every year, the tournament is getting better."

According to Monkman, who has now won three gold

medals, one silver medal and four bronze medals as coach or manager of Team Manitoba, the men had some outstanding players this spring.

"Maxx Hamelin was very good and was named the Top Forward," he said. "Our goaltender Mariko Bercier was terrific and was named the Top Goaltender in the tournament. Luke Wagner on the back-end was great. Marlen Edwards was good again. Nick Giasson from the Steelers was really good for us. I didn't know what to expect from him, but he was really good. I think every line had three players that contributed. It was a well-balanced team."

Bear, meanwhile, was thrilled with his team's performance. With this year's bronze medal, he has now won three gold, two silver and four bronze medals as an assistant or head coach with Team Manitoba.

"It was a great week with an awesome group of girls," said Bear, who also coached Prairie Blaze to the championship of the Manitoba Women's Junior



## MALE TEAM MANITOBA 2024 NATIONAL BRONZE MEDALISTS

2. AYDEN COLLINS	D	MMF Thompson Region
4. BENSON HIRST	D	MMF Southeast Region
5. LUKE WAGNER	D	MMF Winnipeg Region
7. TYLER BERNIER	F	MMF Winnipeg Region
8. HUBERT CLARKE	D	Norway House Cree Nation
11. MAXX HAMELIN	F	MMF Winnipeg Region
12. TAVON MCCORRISTER	F	Peguis First Nation
13. BLAKE FARTHING	F	MMF Interlake Region
14. MIKEY THOMAS	F	Chemawawin First Nation
15. IAN BUORS	F	Sandy Bay First Nation
16. NICHOLAS GIASSON	F	MMF Winnipeg Region
17. CHANTYIN MICHELL-THOMPSON	F	Opaskwayak Cree Nation
19. PEYTON ALLARD	F	MMF Winnipeg Region
20. ALEXANDRE ANDRE	F	MMF Winnipeg Region
21. GAGE SUTHERLAND	D	Peguis First Nation
24. CARTER HANEY	F	MMF Winnipeg Region
27. MARLEN EDWARDS	F	Lake Manitoba First Nation
29. NOAH OUGHTON	F	MMF Interlake Region
31. MARIKO BERCIER	G	Opaskwayak Cree Nation
35. AUSTIN KINDRAT	G	MMF Winnipeg Region

Head Coach: **JASON SMITH** Opaskwayak Cree Nation  
 Assistant Coach: **JOSH TRIPP** Liard First Nation (Yukon)  
 Assistant Coach: **HAYDEN YAREMKO** MMF The Pas Region  
 Manager: **KEVIN MONKMAN** Ebb and Flow First Nation  
 Trainer: **ERIC FAVEL** Peguis First Nation  
 General Manager: **ROBYN CRUZ** MMF Winnipeg Region

Hockey League in 2024. "It was the most disciplined group of girls I ever had. They worked very hard.

"But we didn't win, and I hate losing. Everything was going good, but we'd lost against Alberta in the round-robin in a very close game. We knew they had a good team with a couple of really good players. So, we ended up meeting them in the semifinals, which is what I wanted because I wanted to get a little revenge. Our girls played great, but Alberta took us to triple overtime and even though our girls had outshot them by 25 shots, they scored a lucky one and beat us. It was a lucky goal.

"Rachel (Halldorson) had made some outstanding saves during the game, but one flukey one got by her. The Alberta goalie was sensational, as well. Rachel was so good, but they got a lucky one on us."

Regardless, the future bodes well for Manitoba's women.

"Our players were all so good," said Bear. "My goalies

were key, Rachel Halldorson and Natalie Rampton. Linnea Misner and Kurtia Yetman on defence were really good. Sophie Thompson played really well. Kai Hyatt was really awesome and was our Most Sportsmanlike Player. It's the first time she's played for me and she had a great tournament. We're lucky to be getting Misner and Hyatt back for next year's tournament.

"Up front, the players we expected to be good, were really good – Haley Braun, Breigh Rank, Ginger Fast. I was disappointed for Reese Schutte who was injured in the second game and put out for the rest of the tournament. I expected a lot from her and it's too bad she got hurt, but we have her for two more years so she's going to be really good. Oh, and Rio Pierre (Avros), was really good. Big kid with a great attitude.

"We have a good core to come back with: Reese, Rio, Misner, Hyatt, Braya Kapusta. We'll be solid next year, as well. We have a very bright future."





## JETS GIVE LOCALS THE ROYAL TREATMENT

For one week every summer – usually just a handful of days after the *NHL Draft* – each NHL club hosts its annual development camp. Serving as an opportunity for recent draftees, prospects and listed camp signees to showcase their skills for management and members of the coaching staff, development camps also function as a critical time of

comradery and the bringing together of youngsters keen on developing long-term working relationships with one another, despite the obvious competition.

This July, the Winnipeg Jets opted to send out development camp invites to four members of the local community. Listed on the team's official 35-man roster were forwards Gavin Hodnett (Winnipeg) and Luke Mistelbacher (Steinbach),

defenceman Nathan Brown (Winnipeg) and goaltender Reid Dyck (Winkler).

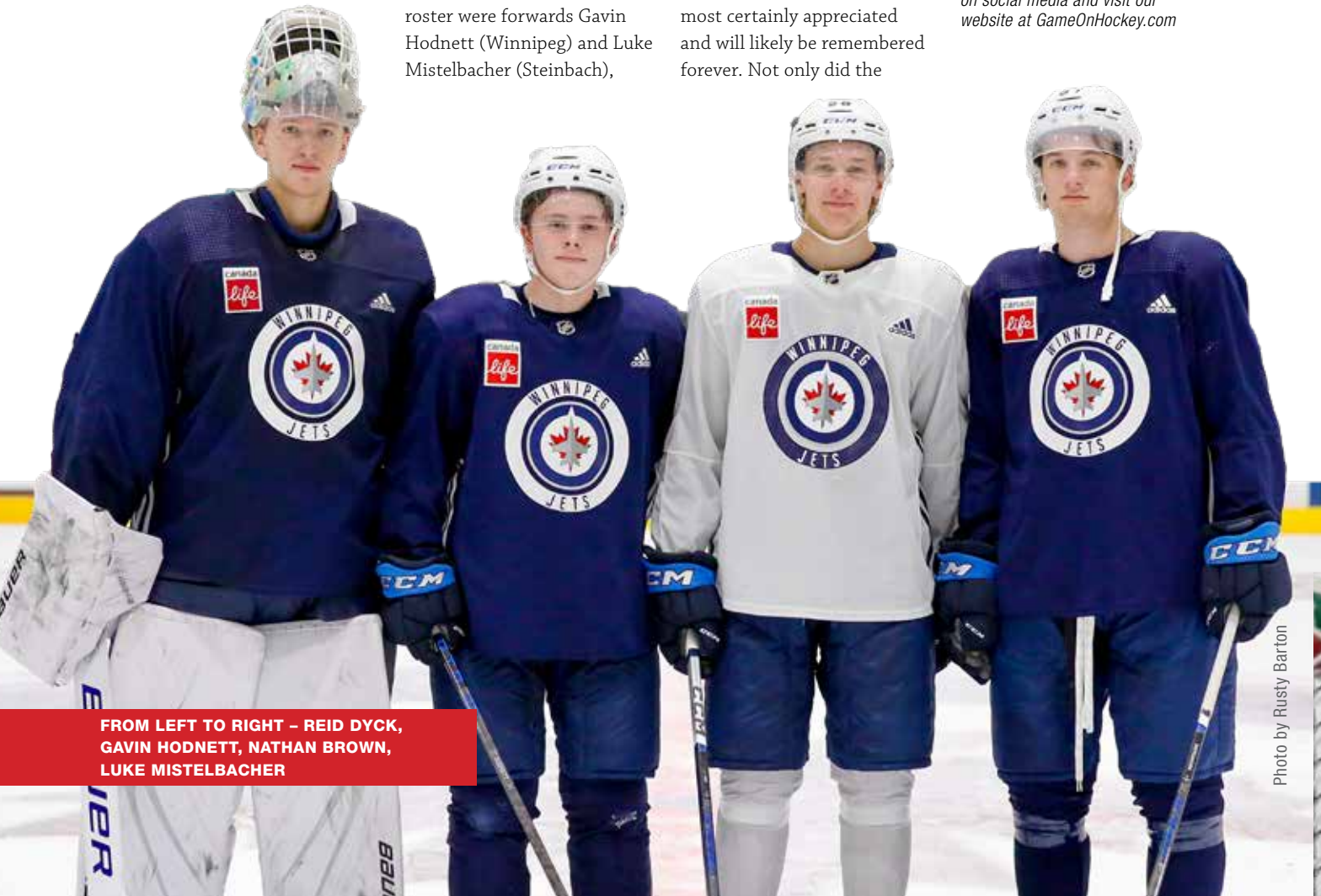
Two members of the former Winnipeg ICE – Ben Zloty and Graham Sward – were also invited to attend the week-long prospects camp.

For the crew of Manitobans, the simple gesture from True North Sports + Entertainment (TNSE) management was most certainly appreciated and will likely be remembered forever. Not only did the

locals skate alongside a host of players set on becoming household names, they also were given the royal treatment from Jets coaches and training staff – both on and off the ice.

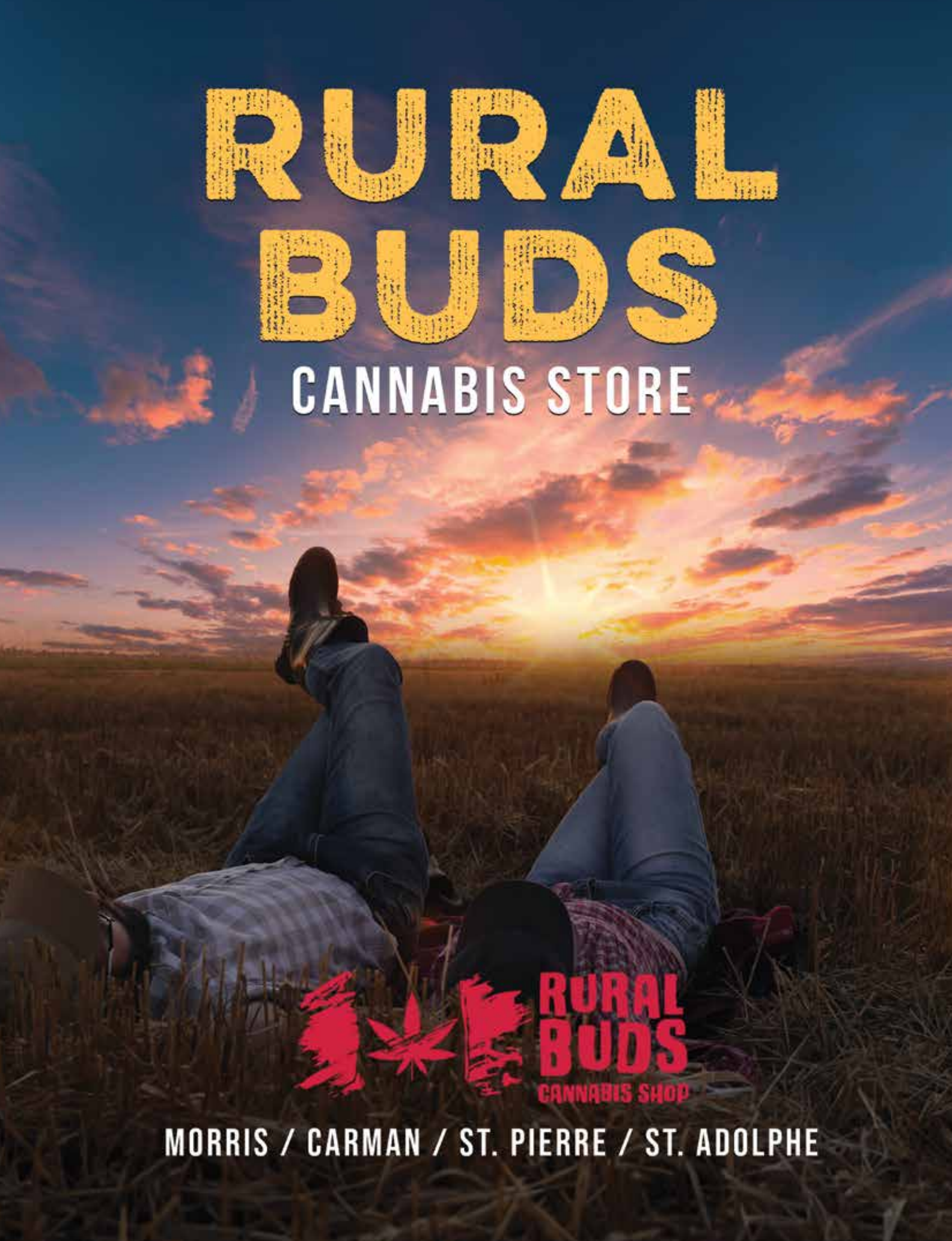
Once again, stick taps all around to Mark Chipman, Kevin Cheveldayoff and the front office staff of TNSE.

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FROM LEFT TO RIGHT – REID DYCK, GAVIN HODNETT, NATHAN BROWN, LUKE MISTELBACHER

Photo by Rusty Barton



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