

## Directors Report- U7 2021

It goes without saying that the 2020-21 season presented a unique set of challenges. From a numbers perspective, registration was as follows:

2020-21 season

U7 Jr. 66 players (23 coaches carded)

U7 Sr. 81 players (32 coaches carded)

This represents a slight decrease from the year before, which saw registration as follows:

2019-20 season

U7 Jr. 69 players (22 coaches carded)

U7 Sr. 94 players (30 coaches carded)

This slight decrease in players is likely attributable to the overall impediments that youth sports has encountered over the past 16 months due to COVID-19. U7 Sr. consisted of six teams and U7 Jr. consisted of three teams plus the U7 Wildcats. Despite COVID-19 both divisions managed to get a significant amount of ice time logged throughout the season having the benefit of starting a little earlier than some other divisions and the absence of a need for games. On a positive note, players enjoyed less crowded ice surfaces as we were restricted to two teams per session as opposed to three. Overall, from a development and “play” perspective the season felt quite similar to those in years past because there are no games and little travel involved, if any, during a regular hockey year and this age group is typically broken into smaller groups regardless.

MHMHA again partnered with the P3 program to assist in the development of our young athletes in this age category. Looking ahead, the talent coming into U9 and now U11 is a testament to this program and small ice/frequent touches hockey programs in general. It will be the intent to continue with this program going forward to continue to assist in developing our younger players with skills and drills mixed with fun games to maintain interest. The players also benefited from power skating sessions with Platinum Star skating. Finally, U7 Sr. players were invited to participate in the newly developed MHMHA goaltending sessions to assist in the development of this position.

From an infrastructure perspective, MHMHA invested in new bumpers, nets and pucks to outfit additional playing surfaces for our skaters. This will assist in providing more ice times and development opportunities going forward.

Going forward, there will be relatively minor changes to the U7 age group for the coming year. I expect a greater emphasis will be placed on facilitating development of skaters who want more exposure to the position of goalie outside of the normal U7 practices. Those practices offer limited opportunities for players to try this position and by having additional ice times and opportunities, it is hoped that more skaters will have exposure and an interest in this position as they enter the U9 division. I had hoped to implement a few changes around the year end jamboree to make it feel a little more like a tournament

but unfortunately we did not have the opportunity to do so. Look for some changes to that for the 2021-22 season ahead.

Although challenging, it was a pleasure to assist the great team at MHMHA in running this years U7 division.

Respectfully,

Kevin Kurtz

MHMHA U7 Director