

## 2025-26 Annual General Meeting

### Director Competitive Report (Blues)

It was a very successful season for the Blues, both on and off the ice. Organizational success can be measured in many ways. This report is only a small overview of the multiple successes and improvements that the Blues have implemented for the third straight season.

For the 2025-26 season, the Blues iced eight (8) teams, U10 to U18. This was the second season post covid that we iced a U18 team. Tryout numbers continued to trend upwards, 5% increase over last season and 37% increase over the last three seasons. Numbers were up at most levels, except at U15. We imported 1 goalie at U12, and 1 goalie & 4 players at U15. We also moved up a Blues U14 player up to U15 in early January. The primary factor that impacted the numbers at U15 was that a handful of players were successful in making the jump to AA and AAA over the past few seasons and a few decided to go back to house league. Based on this season affiliation usage at U15 and being informed by a few of the families which went back to house league this season, of their plans to try out for Blues next season, we are optimistic tryout numbers will increase next season at U16 (2011 cohort). We are also optimistic that the additional efforts to improve the Blues programs this season, including increased communications, development and the increase of secured practice ice will strengthen registration again for the 2026/27 tryouts.

Association breakdown of the 138 rostered players was: 72 from EMHA, 60 from BMHA, and 6 imports.

This season, the Blues continued to build on our plan and vision that was started three seasons ago and were able to implement some more procedural initiatives which made a positive impact, and we plan to carry forward and build upon them in the years to come.

Highlighted areas of focus/new initiatives this past season:

- increased communication (email, website, Facebook)
- transparency in tryouts (more independent evaluators, protocols/evaluation metrics, evaluation app)
- increased presence/visibility of directors at games/practices; executives attended 75 plus games
- increased amount of practices
- increased goalie development
- Blues coach mentor - Jean-Marc Dupont
- Blues host development sessions (on top of the EMHA coach sessions)
- improved the coach selection process (minimum requirements/qualifications)
- increased focus and emphasis on team attendance
- added pre-season body-contact sessions for interested players at U15 and U16
- pre-season mandatory discipline education session for players/coaches (Blues U13-U18)
- Blues Tryout volunteer Schedule - Google spreadsheet / Role descriptions

The Blues teams represented very well in the B league and tournaments. Four teams finished the regular season in the top half. U11, U16 and U18 made it to the semi finals in the B League playoffs. Blues teams combined attended a total of 32 tournaments and demonstrated immense success by bringing home 5 gold medals, 9 silver medals, and made it to the semi finals 9 other times.

Development was one of the main areas that the Blues continued to build on from the previous season. Due to ice issues at the start of the season, we weren't fully able to implement weekly/bi-weekly development for both players and goalies, however, we covered additional team development provider cost at the team's practices. We used Apex and Genesis Hockey for the player development sessions. For the goalie sessions we used Goalie Army Academy, Capital Goalie School and Hockey Genesis. There was a strong emphasis placed on investing in our players and coaches again this season. Teams also invested

between \$2000-\$7500 in additional player and goalie development, either through dryland training, goalie training, skills training or power skating of their choice. The Blues also invested/contributed up to \$1500 per team to the teams for development, Blues hosted or paid development sessions, 5hrs extra ice per team and reimbursed 1-2 coach certification per team. This represents a continued increase from previous years, and ultimately established greater development success for our players and coaches. The Blues are planning on expanding on this for the 2026/27 season.

As the Blues program is a feeder to the AA/AAA levels, there is a need to ensure there is an adequate pool of potential players readily available to make the jump to the next level. This season we continued to put a lot of emphasis on Affiliate Player usage. Across all eight Blues teams there were a total of 43 affiliates, of which attended 257 development sessions/practices, and played in 231 games.

There is more to hockey than just playing games and practicing. This year, a few of our teams spent time helping our community by taking part in an internal food drive challenge, as well as inspiring some healthy competition by challenging some of their home game opponents before Christmas. In total, the teams collected approximately 500 items that were donated to the local food banks. Our Blues U13 team also took part in a friendly game with the Ottawa Bandits Hockey club (a program for special needs players).

Looking Ahead to the 2026/27 season:

- 1) New Website - Goalline platform being decommissioned, currently switching website over to one of their newer platforms "CrossBar".
- 2) For tryouts, the Blues Presidents have informed coaches during their interviews that they are planning on piloting all external independent evaluators at a few levels. Most likely at U10, U11, U14 and U15, final details and levels to be confirmed.
- 3) B League will be moving to electronic game sheets starting next season.
- 4) Trainer mentor
- 5) Blues Branded medal for Blues Capital Hockey Fest; Champions and Finalists

In closing, I would like to thank Andrew Pile, Todd O'Brien and Chris McArthur for their collaboration in working towards the same goals to continuously improve the Blues program.

I would also like to thank all the following;

Lisabeth Sharkey (EMHA Treasurer), Todd O'Brien (BMHA President) and Chris McArthur (EMHA President) for taking care of the Blues finances / budgeting this season.

Bob Sawchak, Maryse Smith for managing the social media accounts.

Joel Neuheimer and the coach mentorship group for running the Blues body contact session and offering all our Blues coaches access to the EMHA Coach Mentorship Program.

Jean-Marc Dupont for taking on the role of Blues Coach Mentor,

All the coaches, and volunteers that spent countless hours coaching and volunteering during the tryouts and season. Without these amazing volunteers, none of this could have been possible.

Mike Webb (Ice Scheduler) for ensuring the EMHA hosted Blues teams received their required minimum allocation and were able to purchase extra ice, which is a very important part of running a successful development program.

I hope everyone has a great summer and I look forward to seeing everyone next season.

Chris Proulx  
Director Competitive