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MANITOBA

HELLEBUYCK'S 300th WIN

This magnificent, autographed wall-hanging, unframed is 16" high by 20" wide and features a celebration of Connor Hellebuyck's 300th win. It can also be purchased as a framed piece that is 25" high and 28" wide. The unframed, autographed print is $89.99, and the beautifully framed autographed piece is $329.99 only at Joe Daley's Sports & Framing.

Connor Hellebuyck, from Commerce, Michigan, was the Winnipeg Jets' fifth round selection (130th overall) in the 2012 NHL entry Draft out of the Odessa Jackalopes of the North American Hockey League. After two seasons at UMass-Lowell and a season and a half in the American Hockey League, he joined the Jets for 26 games in 2015-16 and by 2016-17 was the club's No. 1 goaltender. He is a two-time Vezina Trophy winner, and this year won his second-straight William Jennings Trophy for allowing the fewest goals among NHL starters (at least 25 games). He is only the fifth goalie in history to win the Jennings Trophy in back-to-back seasons. He is also the No. 1 goaltender for the United States National Team.

Back on Jan. 7, 2025, Hellebuyck won his 300th career game, backstopping a 5-2 Jets' win over the Nashville Predators at Canada Life Centre. He won 22 more games after that and finished the 2024-25 season with a career high 47 wins and an eye-popping record of 47-12-3 as he led the Jets to the first President's Trophy in franchise history. He is very likely going to win his third Vezina Trophy this year and just could be the NHL's Most Valuable Player.

This fabulous framed, autographed piece by Travis Daley at Joe Daley's Sports & Framing commemorates the winning milestones in Hellebuyck's brilliant career.

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MANITOBANS BRING HOME THE GOLD

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TEAM CANADA'S JACKSON SMITH, BRANDON'S BURKE HOOD, WINNIPEG'S MATTHEW GARD, DAXON RUDOLPH, KEATON VERHOEFF, CAPTAIN BRAEDEN COOTES AND ASSISTANT CAPTAIN COLE RESCHNY WITH THE CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY, LUKAS SAWCHYN, CAMERON SCHMIDT, BEN KINDEL, RYAN LIN, AND CYPRESS RIVER'S CARSON CARELS

BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by Tim Allen IIHF/Images on Ice/Hockey Hall of Fame

MATTHEW GARD

Matthew Gard, the 18-year-old Winnipegger who plays for the Western Hockey League's Swift Current Broncos called it one of the best times ever.

Just making Team Canada and putting on the Maple Leaf jersey will do that for most Canadian teenaged hockey players, but throw in a World Championship gold medal on top of it and the experience is one that will never be forgotten.

Gard, along with two other Manitobans, Cypress River's 16-year-old Carson Carels of the Prince George Cougars and Brandon's 18-year-old Burke Hood of the Vancouver Giants, helped Canada win the 2025 IIHF World U18 Hockey Championship in Frisco, Tex.

And in the championship game, the young Canadians didn't mess around.

Canada scored early and often, built a 4-0 lead before the midway point in the second period and coasted past Sweden 7-0 to claim its second-straight U18 World Championship.

It was the first time Canada has ever won back-to-back U18 World titles and the sixth time in the 25-year history of the event.

"It was pretty surreal," said Gard, a 6-foot-5, 195-pound power forward who built his game at Winnipeg's RINK Hockey Academy. "This is my first time playing ice hockey for Team Canada and it's all been very exciting. It's a real honour to wear the Maple Leaf and I know I'd love to do it again if I got the opportunity."

Carels, a 6-foot-1, 190-pound defenceman who is expected to be a first-round selection in the 2026 NHL Draft, felt the same way.

"My experience with this team was really enjoyable," said Carels, who also led Team Manitoba to a gold medal at the WHL Cup in 2023. "From our pre-camp all the way until that gold medal, it's been a lot of fun. I have great teammates, and the coaching staff is just so professional."

Hood, meanwhile, is a 6-foot-3, 190-pound netminder who was Canada's third goaltender at the Worlds and did not suit up for a game. However, Carels and Gard got plenty of playing time in Frisco. Gard had a goal and three assists in the tournament while Carels had a goal and played an average of 22 minutes per game in all seven games during the tournament.

Canada, of course went undefeated and only had one scare – they had to beat Czechia 3-2 in overtime in the quarterfinal round. They beat Slovakia 4-0 in the semifinal and shut out Sweden in the final.

Carels was one of the best players in the tournament and on the TSN telecast, analyst Craig Button took notice.

"I had a conversation with an NHL general manager this week and we were discussing the rapid improvement of Carson Carels," Button said. "The general manager said to me, 'Oh yes, he's going to have an NHL career. For about 18 years.' That's how highly the NHL thinks of Carels."

Carels, who had an outstanding rookie season with the Western Hockey League's Prince George Cougars -- six goals and 35 points in 60 games – is not only one of the top players on Canada's U18 team, he's probably the greatest player ever to play at Manitoba's Pilot Mound Hockey Academy.

He spent three seasons at Pilot Mound, leaving the U17 Buffaloes at 15 to head to Prince George after notching 18 goals and 50 points in just 27 games from the back end in 2023-24. That season, he averaged a staggering 33 minutes a game. Not surprisingly, he was named a Canadian Sport School Hockey League First Team All-Star, the league's Most Valuable Player, the CSSHL's Top Defenceman and the leading scorer among D-men.

Gard, meanwhile, had the time of his life at the U18 Worlds.

"This has been lots of fun," he said, via telephone from the loading dock at the rink in Allen, Tex. "And, yeah, I've learned quite a bit. I've really learned that things happen a lot faster, and I have to be ready for whatever's thrown at me."

Gard grew up in the Seven Oaks area of Winnipeg and came by both his height and athletic skills honestly and genetically. His parents, Jay and Sherry, were university volleyball stars who also played with Canada's national volleyball teams. His dad also played pro volleyball in Europe.

In the final 2024-25 NHL Draft rankings, produced by the league's Central Scouting Bureau, Gard was rated the 37th best skater in North America.

"I'm not too sure what they're doing with the Draft, nobody has asked me to attend yet, but I'm still excited about it," said Gard, who also won a silver medal playing for Canada at the 2023 U16 World Ball Hockey Championships in Liberec, Czechia. "It's a big day and I can't wait for it."

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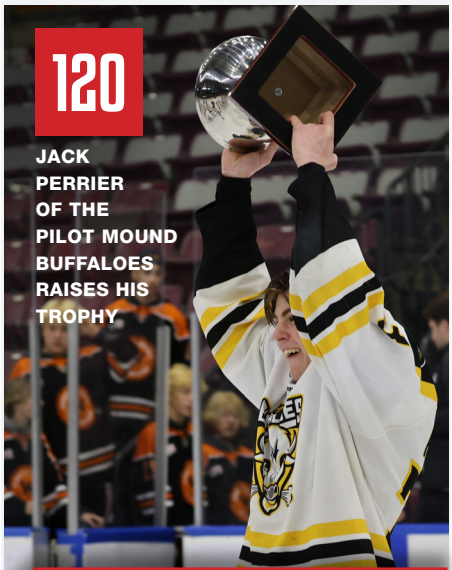

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JACK PERRIER OF THE PILOT MOUND BUFFALOES RAISES HIS TROPHY

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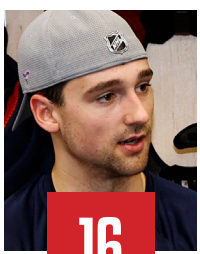
FROM ANTLERS TO WINGS

MANITOBA'S BEST

CELEBRATING OUR PLAYERS OF THE MONTH



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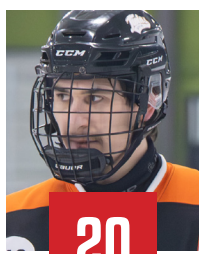

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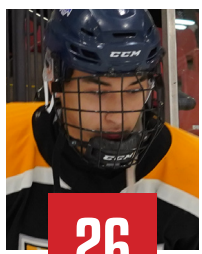

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MANITOBANS BRING HOME THE GOLD 6
Winnipeg's Matthew Gard, Cypress River's Carson Carels and Brandon's Burke Hood earn gold medals at the 2025 U18 World Championship.

FORMER NHLER BOOTH TO JOIN WINNIPEG'S GOULET IN OZ 34
Winnipeg's Kerry Goulet has lobbied fromer NHL star David Booth out to Australia where he has joined the Melbourne Ice of the Australian Ice Hockey League.

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Track star and U17 AAA Winnipeg Thrashers speedy forward Kaiden Lantican is known to his teammates as the Filipino Guy LaFleur.

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There is nothing better than winning a championship, unless, of course, you get to win one with your brother. That was the case for Shaftesbury's Jayden and Kaylen Mateychuk.

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The hockey family banded together for Mark Scheifele, his family and the Winnipeg Jets during Winnipeg's second round series against the Dallas Stars.

JHD COACHES SELECTED TO LEAD TEAM MANITOBA INTO WHL CUP 62
Two outstanding coaches – Devin Himpe and Andy Kollar – will lead Manitoba's U16 team into the WHL Cup in October.

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Max Gardiner is a prime example of a Jets Hockey Development coach who supports his players both on and off the ice.

TRUE TO THE GAME 98
Meet 19-year-old apprentice electrician Darby Olson, who served the role of the Pembina Valley Twisters' MVP in 2024-25.

WINNIPEG JETS

38

A SEASON TO REMEMBER

The Presidents' Trophy-winning Winnipeg Jets set countless franchise and league records. A year-in-review and photo gallery.

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Magazines Canada

BRING IN THE ROBOTS

Will the National Hockey League ever get it right? Actually, let me re-phrase: Will the big-four North American sporting leagues ever get it right?

We have ChatGPT, but we still can't tell if a hockey puck fully crossed the goal line.

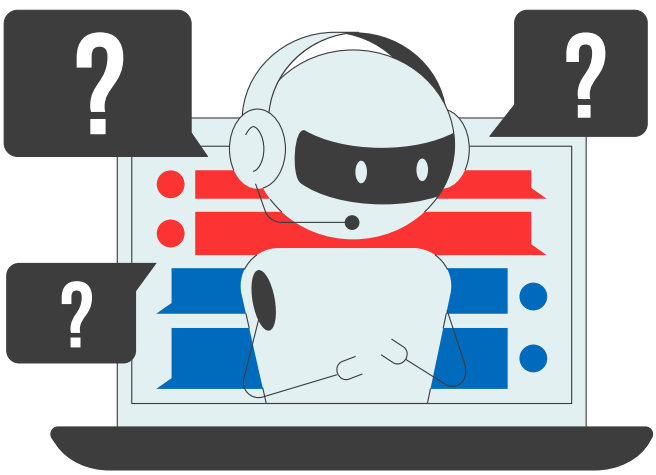
We have cryptocurrency and digital wallets, but we still don't know the definition of pass interference.

We have 5G networks and virtual reality, but still see game-changing collisions on the court between basketball players and the referees.

We have gene-editing technology, but we still can't figure out balls from strikes, safe from out, and home runs from fan interference.

Quite frankly, officiating within the NHL, MLB, NFL and NBA has been atrocious over recent years. It is only amplified come the postseason, and right now, things really couldn't be much worse than the various displays of incompetence put on by the officials across the leagues this spring.

A couple years back, I took a trip down to Arizona and was stunned when a Jaguar I-Pace Waymo taxi pulled up next to me at a red light with passengers seated in the backseat but no driver. This, I was assured, was perfectly fine and law-abiding. "It's the greatest thing!" the partially inebriated couple shouted out to me from the backseat of the Jaguar after spotting my jaw resting on the steering wheel.



If we have the technology to provide personalized shuttle service to and from local bars in extremely busy American mega-cities, how do we not yet have cameras or camera angles 'good enough' to tell if a player has skated offside, if a ball was thrown outside the strike zone, or if a running back's knee was down prior to the goal line.

Is it time to bring in the robot umps? I think so. The MLB experimented with reviewing balls and strikes in spring training this year, and unbeknownst to the commissioner, it appeared to be a booming success.

Do linesmen and referees play a critical part in the game of hockey? Absolutely. But do they find themselves in the way more often than not? For sure.

Nikolaj Ehlers almost missed a full month of hockey after crashing into a linesman in Chicago this past April. His teammate Haydn Fleury was also involved in a scary collision with referee Steve Kozari last year. That one was a game-shaking blow that saw Kozari leave the ice on a stretcher and miss three weeks of action. Fleury wasn't so lucky; he didn't play the rest of the season and playoffs.

Cole Perfetti had what looked like a sure goal against the St. Louis Blues called off for the sake of inconclusive evidence. Why hasn't the league figured out a way to track the data in the puck, combined with its geographical placement in comparison to the goal line, to automatically call goals from above?

Can the same not be done with offsides and penalties? Why is it that these judgment calls so often are made incorrectly?

I recently stumbled upon a rather entertaining Twitter thread by 'Scouting the Refs,' which is updated daily through the postseason, highlighting various missed calls, collisions, etc. It is absolutely mind-blowing the number of inconsistencies present in just two rounds of Stanley Cup Playoff action alone.

We are well within the fourth industrial revolution. It's time for league officials to put on their Smart Glasses and find the technology to call error-less games.

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PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

Photos courtesy of Andy Kollar, Kristen Campbell, Raygan Kirk and the PWHL

THE TORONTO GOALTENDING TANDEM

The Toronto Sceptres' goaltending tandem of Kristen Campbell and Raygan Kirk are the 2025 Game On Female Athletes of the Year.

Serving the Sceptres of the second-year Professional Women's Hockey League startup, Campbell (Brandon) and Kirk (Ste. Anne) worked hand-in-hand as a rotating 1A and 1B for the league's second-place team.

Finishing the season with a 15-9-6 record, Toronto placed No. 2 out of six league clubs and will face Minnesota in the postseason.

The second year Campbell went 9-8-4 on the year with a sparkling 2.25 goals against average and a .910 save percentage. While Kirk, who was playing in her first season in the PWHL, went 5-1-2 and posted a 2.26 goals against average and an even better .917 save percentage.

Congratulations to both Kristen and Raygan from the *Game On* editorial board.

NEAL PIONK

4

DEFENCE // SHOOTS RIGHT // 6'0"

BORN JULY 29, 1995 // OMAHA, NEB

2024-25 TEAM: WINNIPEG JETS (NHL)

2024-25 POST-SEASON STATS

WINNIPEG JETS

13
GAMES

7
POINTS

46:15
ICE-TIME RECORD

Back on May 4, Neal Pionk played quite possibly the greatest game of his life. It undoubtedly was the most memorable, and certainly the most tiring. With star defenceman Josh Morrissey going down with an injury in the game's early stages, the 29-year-old Pionk stepped up to fill the large role left open in Morrissey's absence. He contributed with three assists, including the shot that was deflected in by Adam Lowry in double overtime, helping send the Jets to the second round. Thanks to the two extra periods of hockey and the absence of Morrissey, Pionk skated in a career-high 59 shifts, totaling a whopping 46:15 time on-ice. As such, he became the first defenceman to play over 40 minutes in a Game 7 since Al MacInnis and Chris Pronger did so back in 1999.

Photos by James Carey Lauder and Scott Stroh

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TRAVIS SANHEIM

6

DEFENCE // SHOOTS LEFT // 6'4"

BORN MARCH 29, 1996 // ELKHORN, MAN

2024-25 TEAM: PHILADELPHIA FLYERS (NHL)

2024-25 SEASON STATS

PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

82 GAMES

8 GOALS

30 POINTS

Travis Sanheim quietly had one of the best seasons by a Manitoban NHL defenceman. It very well may have been the best, all things considered. Not only did the 29-year-old Elkhorn product skate in all 82 games for his Philadelphia Flyers for the second time in his career, he was also selected to represent his country twice over the past few months. Chosen to play for Canada on the grandest of stages at the 4 Nations Cup this past February, Sanheim enjoyed added minutes on the Canadian blueline with injuries to Shea Theodore and Josh Morrissey. Then, this spring, Philadelphia's 2014 17th overall selection was asked again to play for Team Canada – this time at the World Championship, and of course, he obliged. Not only did he produce the most points out of all Manitoba defencemen this year, he represented his country twice.

James Carey Lauder and HHOF/Images on Ice

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DEAN GORCHYNSKI

7

FORWARD // SHOOTS LEFT // 6'2"

BORN JANUARY 8, 2003 // WINNIPEG, MAN

2024-25 TEAM: FORT GARRY/FORT ROUGE TWINS (MMJHL)

2024-25 SEASON STATS

FORT GARRY/FORT ROUGE TWINS

45
GAMES

33
GOALS

101
POINTS

The winner of the 2024-25 Myron Prymak Memorial Trophy as the Most Valuable Player in the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League, the 22-year-old Gorchynski also won the Steve Claus Memorial Trophy as the MMJHL's leading scorer. He led the Twins to first place overall this season (the Art Moug Trophy) with a record of 36-7-0 and helped his team reach the post-season semifinals. In the post-season, he was the Twins' second-leading scorer with three goals and 11 points. Gorchynski has had a tremendous career from his days with the U14 Warriors, U15 Monarchs and U18 Winnipeg Wild, to two-plus seasons in the MJHL with the Blues, the Freeze, the Selkirk Steelers and Virden Oil Capitals. He joined the Twins last season and has helped turn the Twins into one of the best junior teams in Manitoba.

Photos by Merlin Heppner

POV: You Get the Hype

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MANITOBA

NAAMAN HOFER

8

DEFENCE // SHOOTS LEFT // 6'0"

BORN APRIL 1, 2004 // WINNIPEG, MAN

2024-25 TEAM: DAUPHIN KINGS (MJHL)

2024-25 SEASON STATS

DAUPHIN KINGS

52
GAMES

7
GOALS

50
POINTS

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League's defenceman of the year and winner of the Brian Kozak Trophy, Hofer has played an amazing 213 games in the MJHL with the Portage Terriers (6), the Winnipeg Freeze (99) and the Kings (108). He came out of Seven Oaks and played U17 AAA with the Winnipeg Bruins and in 2020-21, during the COVID year, he played six games with Portage. In 2021-22 he played his first of two seasons with the Freeze and then, before the start of the 2023-24 season, he was traded to Dauphin where he has helped make the Kings one of the Top 4 teams in the MJHL. Hofer has committed to playing the 2025-26 season with the NCAA D-1 Alaska-Anchorage University Seawolves.

Photos by Todd Pederson

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JOCELYNE LAROCQUE

3

DEFENCE // SHOOTS LEFT // 5'9"

BORN MAY 19, 1988 // STE. ANNE, MAN

2024-25 TEAM: OTTAWA CHARGE (PWHL)

2024-25 SEASON STATS

OTTAWA CHARGE

25
GAMES

0
GOALS

6
POINTS

CANADA

Jocelyne Larocque, Manitoba's Female Indigenous Athlete of the Decade (2011-2020), won another silver medal at this year's IIHF World Championships and became the first defender to reach 200 games with Canada's national team. She is the most decorated Canadian Indigenous international athlete in history. No other First Nation or Metis athlete can even claim to have won two Olympic gold and one Olympic silver medal, four World Championship gold medals, eight World Championship silver medals and one World Championship bronze medal. Now, after another solid season with the Ottawa Charge in the PWHL, Larocque just played in her 12th World Championship as Canada finished second in Ceske Budejovice, Czechia.

Photos by Images on Ice/Hockey Hall of Fame

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CHANTYN MICHELL-THOMPSON

17

FORWARD // SHOOTS LEFT // 5'9"

BORN SEPT. 29, 2008 // OPASKWAYAK CREE NATION, MAN

2024-25 TEAM: NORMAN NORTHSTARS (MU18AAAHL)

2024-25 SEASON STATS

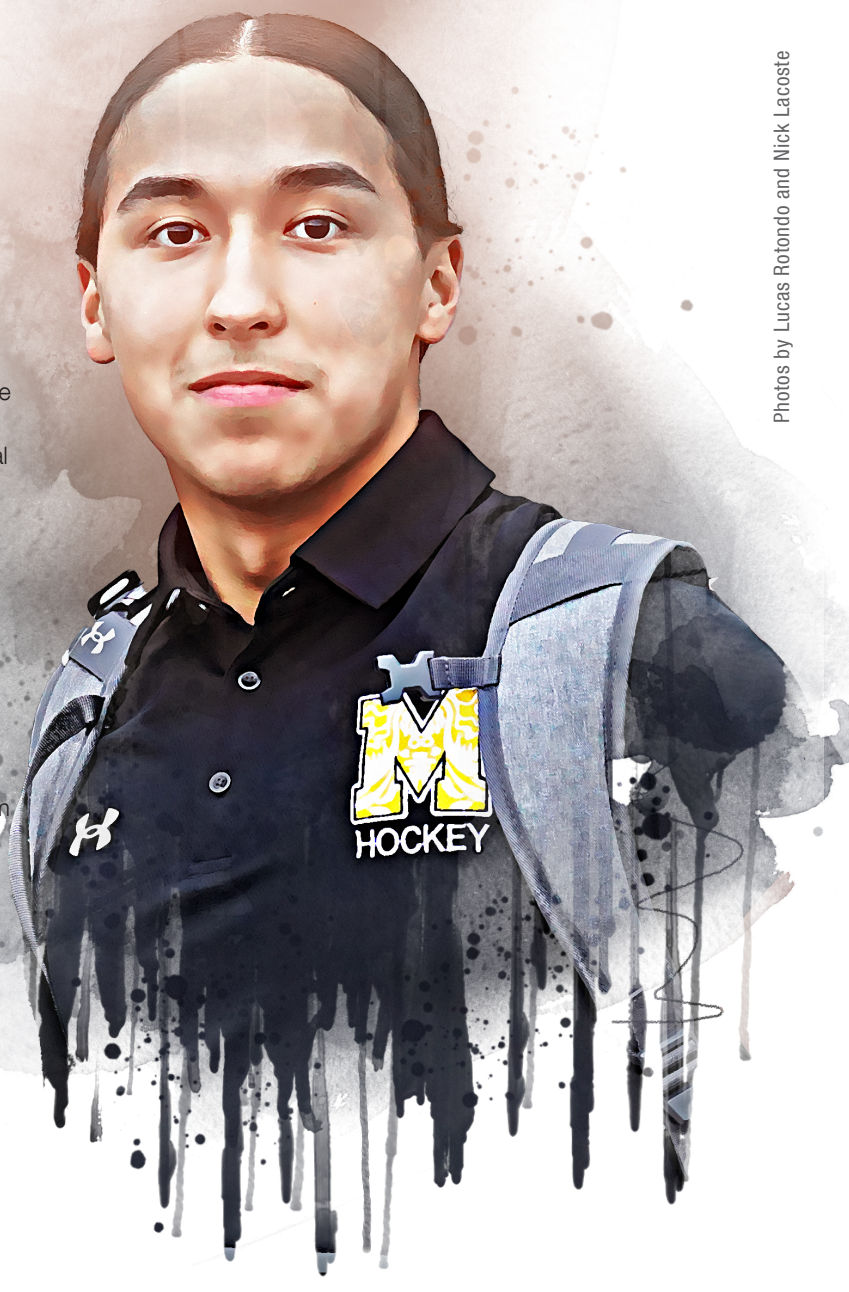
NORMAN NORTHSTARS

33 GAMES

19 GOALS

54 POINTS

For Team Manitoba head coach Josh Tripp, the surprisingly great play of Chantyn Michell-Thompson was a major reason why Manitoba won gold at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships. "He won the most sportsmanlike player in the tournament and made an unbelievable play to assist on the winning goal in the semifinals against Saskatchewan." Michell-Thompson started the 2024-25 season with the MJHLs' Northern Manitoba Blizzard but spent most of the campaign with U18 AAA Norman Northstars in Thompson. This was his second season with Team Manitoba. He had a goal and six points in seven games this spring.



Photos by Lucas Rotondo and Nick Lacoste

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FEMALE TEAM MANITOBA 2025

1.	BAILEY GRUNEWALD	G
2.	LIBERTY AIME	F
3.	KAI HYATT	D
4.	SELENE WOZNEY	F
5.	KEANDRA BROUGHTON	D
6.	ATTICA SOBERING	D
7.	REESE SCHUTTE	F
8.	KIRBY GRAY	F
9.	RIO PIERRE	F
10.	LINNEA MISNER	D
11.	LANA CIPRIANO	F
12.	GABRIELLE ROBBINS	F
13.	JADE PELLAND	F
14.	BROOKLYN COLLINS	D
15.	BRAYA KAPUSTA	F
16.	BRE-ANN WINDROSS	F
17.	CALLIE PAULL	F
18.	CALI LAVALLEE	F
19.	JESSICA ANDERSON	F
23.	IRELAND COOKE TYMCHAK	F
25.	CHEYENNE SCOTT COOKE	F
26.	DELANEY DARBY	D
31.	ISABELLE LABOSSIERE	G
35.	CASEY MORAND	G

HEAD COACH	DALE BEAR
ASSISTANT COACH	KAITLYN BASSETT
ASSISTANT COACH	DANA GOERTZEN
TRAINER	KEYANNA LEA
MANAGER	JACINTA BEAR

MALE TEAM MANITOBA 2025

2.	SANDRO DELL'ACQUA	D
4.	MADDEN COOKE TYMCHAK	D
5.	CADE MCCALLUM	D
7.	TYDEN LAFOURNAISE	F
8.	HUBERT CLARKE	D
11.	MAXX HAMELIN	F
12.	WYATT DYCK	F
14.	MIKEY THOMAS	F
15.	HANK THOMPSON	F
16.	AYDEN COLLINS	D
17.	CHANTYN MICHELL-THOMPSON	F
19.	GAVIN QUENELLE	F
20.	JULIAN FEDORA	F
21.	GAGE SUTHERLAND	D
24.	CARTER HANEY	F
27.	SHEA ROLLASON	F
28.	TRACES LANGAN	F
29.	NOAH OUGHTON	F
31.	DAWSON GROEN	G
35.	URIJAH MOOSETAIL	G

HEAD COACH	JOSH TRIPP
ASSISTANT COACH	HAYDEN YAREMKO
ASSISTANT COACH	RYAN PERSON
TRAINER	ERIC FAVELL
MANAGER	KEVIN MONKMAN

Photos by Nick Lacoste

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REESE SCHUTTE

7

FORWARD // SHOOTS LEFT // 5'7"

BORN JULY 3, 2008 // BRANDON, MAN

2025-26 TEAM: KINGSTON ICE WOLVES (U22 ELITE)

2024-25 SEASON STATS

WESTMAN WILDCATS

53
GAMES

29
GOALS

70
POINTS

According to Dale Bear, the head coach of Indigenous female Team Manitoba, Reese Schutte "is a complete 200-foot-player." Schutte, who is a citizen of the Red River Metis on her mom's side (Kim Letain) grew up in Brandon and played all her minor hockey there. She just completed her third season with the MFHL U18 AAA's Westman Wildcats and last spring won a bronze medal with Team Manitoba at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championship in Grand Prairie, Alta. Next year, she and her Team Manitoba mate, Rio Pierre will live together in Kingston, Ont., as they play for the Kingston Ice Wolves in the Ontario U22 Elite League. In 2026-27, Schutte will enter NCAA Division 1 Union College in Schenectady, NY, on a hockey scholarship.

Photos by Darryl Gershman

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A WINNING SEASON

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Carter Finch

THE 2025 CSSHL U18 FEMALE PREP II CHAMPIONS, THE BALMORAL HALL BLAZERS.

For Balmoral Hall Blazers captain, Makenna Williment, nothing is more fun than winning.

Williment, who is headed off to NCAA D-1 Syracuse University to play hockey and study bio-chemistry this fall, raised the Canadian Sport School Hockey League's U18 Prep Division II West championship trophy on March 12, in Penticton, B.C., after a 3-2 win over Delta Hockey Academy Black in the championship final.

It's unlikely anything could be more enjoyable.

"It was so much fun, it was a great way to finish off three years for me," said Williment. "It was surreal. We finished ninth during the season, so being in the second level, we were the first seed, so our goal right from the start was to win.

"Our team environment on the weekend was something that I'd never experienced all season. Everyone was so locked in and everyone wanted to win so badly."

Williment who won U15 provincials with the Saints and in Grade 10, was part of the Blazers team that won the prestigious Mandi Schwartz Tournament in Regina, had a goal and an assist in the championship final. Her linemates, Madie McKay and Maddie Kaiser each had a goal and two assists as the Blazers built a 3-0 lead after two periods and held on to claim the championship.

"It turned out to be a close game," said Kaiser, who will play hockey and study business at NCAA D-1 Bemidji State this September. "We were winning 3-0, but they scored two goals with two minutes left, so it got a little scary.

"For me, this was really exciting. I've never won a championship before, always second, so this was my first victory. Carrying the trophy around was so much fun."

In their first season in the CSSHL, the Blazers won the second championship in their program's history, after winning the Junior Women's Hockey League championship in 2019.

The Blazers went 2-0-0 in the round robin portion of the championship tournament in Penticton, beating Northern Alberta Xtreme (Devon, AB) 5-1 to earn a spot in the finals.

Meanwhile, the No. 5-seed Delta Hockey Academy Black (Delta, BC) went 1-0-1 in the round robin portion of the event to finish third, but then beat Pilot Mound Hockey Academy (Pilot Mound, MB) 1-0 in overtime in the quarter-finals and Okanagan Hockey Academy Black (Penticton, BC) 4-3 in overtime in the semi-finals, to reach the championship game.

Williment opened the scoring for BH at 8:13 of the first period with her sixth of the playoffs. Balmoral Hall would double its lead 34 seconds later as Kaiser hit Madie McKay with a great pass and McKay went in on a breakaway to beat Delta goalie Nicole Flescher through the five-hole. Kaiser extended the Blazers' lead to 3-0 early in the second period as Balmoral Hall appeared to have total control heading into the final 20 minutes.

But Delta Black scored with 2:15 remaining and then again, 1:12 after that to make it 3-2, but the challengers were unable to generate any zone time after that and the Blazers held on for the 3-2 win.

The Blazers outshot Delta 39-31 and, although it got "a little scary" at the end, were given full marks for the victory. In the final playoff stats, Williment (six goals, 10 points), Kaiser (four goals, 10 points) and McKay (three goals, 10 points) were the top three scorers.

"It's just the best feeling," said Blazers head coach, Sarah Zacharias. "It's a highlight for all of their hard work.

"The players learned to play short this season. Our roster is only 16. This team had a lot of injuries. We had a lot of games this season with eight forwards and four D to start against teams that carry 22-23 players on their rosters. The girls' ability to be gritty, tenacious, show up every day, and fight the good fight, all paid off.

"And the stars aligned come playoff time. They went 4-0 in Penticton and they get ice cream when we sweep the weekend so they were pretty pumped about that -- almost as much as winning the banner. When we sweep a weekend, they get ice cream and they love that.

"Of course, the most special part of it for me was for our Grade 12s -- the players who paid their dues and had a part in this program for a long time. What a way to end their careers here and hang up their jerseys for the last time. It was just a lot of fun."

SKILL DEVELOPMENT VS. SKILL ACQUISITION

The 2024 NHL Global Coaches Conference in Las Vegas, NV. taught me one thing, "Young players of today have issues connecting skill development to skill acquisition." What does this mean? Simply put, pre-NHL players are put through countless hours of drills, but when it comes to live game situations they fail to adapt part of the drill into the game to create solutions to their on-ice problem solving skills. The Inside Edge has a four-step performance solution to this problem.

STEP 1: BE COMPETITIVE

Players must practice with the mindset to win every puck battle. Being competitive in practice speeds up the read and react process, which in turn speeds up the feet and the hands. Practicing with urgency increases synapse firing of the brain which is needed in decision making. "Finish the drill" was mentioned several times at the 2024 NHL Global Coaches Conference.

STEP 2: WORDS MATTER

We have banned the phrase, "my bad" from training sessions. When an athlete makes a mistake in our speed sessions, the right words are, "I got this next time!" NHL scouts have observed top skilled potential NHL draft players quit in the middle of the drill because they didn't like how the drill was playing out to them, or they would exit the drill and try to re-enter it because they wanted it to feel perfect. Saying "I got this next time" builds confidence for the next rep.

STEP 3: REPETITION WITHOUT REPETITION

To make athletes more accountable in training sessions, preach "repetition without repetition." If an athlete makes a mistake, they must move on. The next time this drill comes up, they must problem solve. Practice with urgency at all times. Game situations don't slow down to allow you to adjust! Practice with the idea that when executing a drill, you will be "one and done." An NHL head coach said to me, "There is no redo in the NHL."

WINNIPEG'S GABE VILARDI TAKES A LOOK OVER HIS SHOULDER AT DETROIT'S BEN CHIAROT WHILE ENTERING A PUCK BATTLE IN THE CORNER

STEP 4: PROBLEM SOLVE

Speed is reading and reacting. Players must trust their mistakes. Several NHL teams place coaches in various parts of the rink to observe the players' "eye posture". Excessive shoulder checks prior to a wall battle means uncertainty. No shoulder checks could mean they are not looking for options or lack problem solving skills. Numerous NHL coaches commented they want to see strong decision-making skills with the ability to be creative in a chaotic environment. Some NHL teams have been known to throw in colored pucks in a drill while telling players "Focus only on the black one."

Moving forward, mentally visualize and connect the drill you are doing in practice to your performance. Ask yourself what can go wrong and how would you improvise to solve the problem. All great hockey players are great problem solvers. "I got this next time coach!"

The next edition of The Inside Edge, will feature a co-written article by myself and Chelsea McCrimmon from Luna Muna. Thank you to all of our readers for your time and support!

"Fear is the thief of all dreams"

Photo by: Scott Stroh

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BY JOHNSTON HALL
Photos courtesy Melbourne Ice Hockey Club

FORMER NHLER BOOTH TO JOIN WINNIPEG'S GOULET IN OZ

Winnipeg's Kerry Goulet, an honoured member of the Manitoba Indigenous Sports Hall of Fame, is also one of the most innovative coaches in the Australian Ice Hockey League.

And in early-May, the head coach of the Melbourne Ice made his latest move official. Goulet announced that former National Hockey League forward David Booth will join the Ice for the remainder of the 2025 AIHL season.

Booth has had an illustrious hockey career that spans more than two decades. Prior to making it to the NHL, Booth won a Gold Medal for Team USA at both the U18 and U20 IIHF Championships. He was also a star at Michigan State and after being selected in Round 2 (53rd overall) of the 2004 NHL Entry Draft, he played 10 combined seasons with the Florida Panthers, Vancouver Canucks, Toronto Maple Leafs and Detroit Red Wings.

Booth played 530 games in the National Hockey League, registering 124 goals and 236 points. Booth had a 30-goal season with the Panthers in the 2008-09 season and was establishing himself as a quality goal scorer when he suffered a major setback in his career.

That's when Mike Richards of the Philadelphia Flyers delivered a crushing blow to an unsuspected Booth, causing him to collapse on the ice with a head injury that would change his life forever. The hit was a deliberate blow to the head and caused Booth to miss more than 50 games with severe concussion symptoms. What hurt even more was the fact he would miss the 2010 Olympics after being selected to the 2010 Team USA Hockey club. Booth battled through the effects of concussions and continued to play at a high level once he was concussion free.

He was voted the Most Valuable Player for the Florida Panthers in 2008-09 and the Most Exciting Player for the Vancouver Canucks in 2011-12. Once his NHL career was over, he decided to take his talents to the KHL in Russia, First League in Norway, DEL2 Germany, where he won the 2023-24 championship and last year, he played in the Erste Liga in Hungary.

"David and his wife Ashley have agreed to travel to Melbourne with their three children," said Goulet, founder of the IHC and Global Director of StopConcussions. "It's not their first taste of Down Under as they already had a connection to Australia. David played for Team USA in the 2015 Ice Hockey Classic in Australia. Ashley joined him on the 2015 trip to Perth and Sydney alongside the Hockey Wives film crew which recorded the series.

"David was a star and a fan favorite as he showed that he was not only a very exciting player but an even more dynamic person, spending time signing autographs for all fans. He quickly became an ambassador for StopConcussions worldwide and still helps raise awareness and funds for the cause.

Over the years, Goulet and Booth stayed in touch, and in 2023 Booth was a guest on the Gouche & Rosey Show where Paul Rosen and Goulet interviewed Booth about his time in Norway. During the interview Booth said, "If I ever played for Gouche, I would go through the wall for him." fast forward to today and Booth has officially signed to play for Goulet's Melbourne Ice in the AIHL.

"Ashley and I are super excited to take on this next journey of my hockey career," Booth said. "I'm coming to Melbourne to first win a Goodall Cup with Coach Goulet and the Melbourne Ice, second I want my young family to experience the beauty of Australia and finally I look forward to playing golf in a country that is known for its for its golf courses and passion for the game."

Booth will arrive in Melbourne on or about May 26, and he said he is honoured and excited to dawn the Karcher Blue, Red and White jersey and begin the quest for the Goodall Cup.

"I love this game," Booth said. "It has been very good to me. I love the fans from around the world who have supported me and my family along this journey. But I have to tell you the passion Coach Goulet has for this great game is so infectious and it only took me minutes to decide to join him and the four-time Goodall Cup champions Melbourne Ice. I'm looking forward to helping this team win its fifth."

DAVID BOOTH PLAYING FOR STORHAMAR IN NORWAY AND FOR HIS HOMETOWN DETROIT RED WINGS. LEFT, KERRY GOULET, HEAD COACH OF THE MELBOURNE ICE.

WHAT IS SPORT MEDICINE?

Sport Medicine is a specialty that focuses on treating and preventing injuries related to sports and physical activity.

Physical activity isn't just playing sports, it includes physical labour for jobs, hobbies, and many other activities. For the most part, Sport Medicine professionals diagnose, treat and try to prevent injuries involving muscles, bones, and joints (i.e. musculoskeletal). Sport Medicine is multidisciplinary and includes physicians, surgeons, nurses, physiotherapists, athletic therapists, exercise physiologists, biomechanists, kinesiologists and engineers. Although this is not an exhaustive list, you get the idea that it takes an elaborate team of specialists with knowledge and expertise in several areas to treat and prevent musculoskeletal injuries.

At Pan Am Clinic Foundation, we have a diverse and talented team of surgeons, researchers, engineers, kinesiologists and allied health care professionals that work together to optimize performance and maximize protection of athletes. We have five streams of research that include Orthopedic Surgery, Orthopaedic Epidemiology, Return to Sport, Sport Science Engineering and Concussion. What do these terms even mean and why do these streams matter to hockey players, athletes and you? Well, here's a brief explanation but you will learn more in subsequent editions.

Shoulder and knee injuries are common in hockey and cover a wide spectrum from bruises, strains, sprains, to broken bones, ruptured tendons and ligaments. Often the more severe injuries require surgery to treat the injury and ensure the athlete can return to a high-level of competition. Our Orthopaedic Surgery stream has been studying knee and shoulder injuries for years and we are eager to share some of our findings. In our next segment, we will discuss ACL injuries in the NHL.

Orthopaedic epidemiology takes a more high-level view of injuries and identifies patterns and risk factors that relate to a specific injury and may affect surgical outcomes. For example, female athletes are 6-8 times more likely to sustain a non-contact anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury of the knee than male athletes.

If an athlete does have surgery (ex. ACL reconstruction) what determines if they can return to their previous level of activity? Two important factors are strength and function. Our Return to Sport stream measures strength and function throughout the recovery process to ensure athletes are progressing sufficiently to return to the sport they have been passionately pursuing.

Is hockey equipment protective enough to prevent broken bones caused by a puck? Unfortunately, we all know that the answer is no. There's a fine line between protection and performance and although equipment is more advanced than it used to be, puck injuries do happen. Our Sport Science Engineering stream is using a puck cannon that can shoot pucks up to 150 mph to find and/or develop equipment that is more protective, but not restrictive to performance.

Concussion, need we say more? Regardless of age, mechanism of injury, or length of recovery, concussions are nerve-wracking for everyone. Concussion research has made some strides over the last decade, but there is a lot more to learn. Our Concussion stream focuses on sport-related concussions and how exercise and supplements can be used for more effective treatment.

Moving forward, we will share specific projects, developments and insights from each research stream to provide you with information that will assist in the treatment and prevention of hockey-related injuries.

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BY CARTER BROOKS
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A SEASON TO REMEMBER

PRESIDENTS' TROPHY WINNERS: CELEBRATING THE 2024-25 WINNIPEG JETS

The 2024-25 iteration of the Winnipeg Jets will long be remembered as Winnipeg's best hockey team.

No, they didn't win the Stanley Cup – or the Avco Cup for that matter. They didn't even make it out of the second round. But for Jets fans across the province this past winter, there was likely a little more pride than normal when labelling Winnipeg as their hometown.

"I'm from Winnipeg. You know, the place with the No. 1 team in the NHL?"

Popular talk shows down in the far-off land of the United States were tuning in to the Jets' wire-to-wire charge. ESPN hosts were regularly mentioning Winnipeg in day-to-day sports coverage regularly reserved for Patrick Mahomes, LeBron James and Aaron Judge.

Connor Hellebuyck, Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Josh Morrissey became household names – not that they weren't already – while brand new head coach Scott Arniel found his way into consideration for the NHL's coach of the year recognition – the Jack Adams Trophy.

Arniel wasn't the only member of Winnipeg's roster up for an award, as goaltender Connor Hellebuyck took home the William Jennings Trophy for the second-straight season as the goaltender of record on the team allowing the fewest goals against through the regular season.

He was also nominated for the Vezina Trophy – which would be his third win and second-straight after taking home the top goaltender award last season. Additionally, Hellebuyck

“CANADA LIFE CENTRE HAD NEVER BEEN LOUDER; IT WAS UTTER PANDEMONIUM”

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CONNOR
81

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was named a finalist for the Hart Trophy – given to the league's MVP following the regular season.

His 47 regular season wins ranked him second on the all-time record list, as he finished nine wins ahead of the second-best goaltender. His 2.01 goals against average and eight shutouts also ranked first, while his .925 save percentage was one percentage point lower than Toronto's Anthony Stolarz, who played 30 fewer games.

Connor finished seventh in both points (97) and goals (41) league-wide, while Scheifele was right behind him with 39 goals and 89 points. Scheifele also finished first with 11 game-winners on the year.

"The way they see the game and they read off each other is so great," captain Adam Lowry said of the team's two offensive stars. "KC's got such a deceptive release. He gets his shot off in traffic, he's able to get separation when it seems like there's not a lot of space. And then Scheif's so cerebral that he's able to buy time. They read off each other so well, they're so dynamic together and their space is incredible."

The Jets concluded the year 56-22-4 for 116 points. That was five points and four wins better than the second-place team in each category. They boasted the best road record and third-best home record out of the 32 clubs. Winnipeg owned the very best power play in the league, scoring on 29 percent of its opportunities given. The Jets also allowed 15 fewer goals than any other team and scored the fifth-most on the season.

But, as the old saying goes, pride often comes before a fall. Winnipeg didn't necessarily 'fall', per se, but the only way to go when you're at the top is down. Sadly, for Jets fans anticipating a victory lap down Portage Avenue with the Stanley Cup, the dream of a league championship ultimately fell short the day the playoff bracket was determined.

Drawing the run-and-gun St. Louis Blues in Round 1 was the start of the end. It was going to be a challenge no matter how it sorted itself out, but St. Louis was not the opponent Winnipeg wanted to see for the first seven games of postseason action. As a matter of fact, the Blues were 1.6 seconds away from sending Winnipeg packing after the first round.

Coming off a 12-game winning-streak late in the season, a physical St. Louis team gave Winnipeg pretty much all it could handle. The Jets started off with back-to-back wins at Canada Life Centre, but were stymied for offence at Enterprise Center. As became a massive storyline as the playoffs wore on, Winnipeg was unable to get a win on the road, sending the series back to Manitoba tied 2-2.

Making matters worse was the fact that the Jets' all-star goaltender was pulled in both games after allowing a combined 11 goals against – far from ideal. Winnipeg managed to snag a win back home in Game 5, but once again came up short on the road, with Hellebuyck getting the yank in another lopsided road loss.

Game 7 likely deserves an entire story of its own, as it was that entertaining. With white-clad fans out in droves to help cheer on their beloved team, Winnipeg fell behind early, jumping off script from the prior home games in the

"I'M FROM WINNIPEG. YOU KNOW, THE PLACE WITH THE NO. 1 TEAM IN THE NHL?"

13
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LOWRY
SAMBOOK
FLEURY
54
24
36
canada life

“GAME 7 COMEBACK WILL LIVE ON IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF JETS FANS FOR A LIFETIME”

APPLETON
22
HELLEBUYCK
37

series. Just when it appeared as though the road team was going to steal the first victory of the series, the Jets caught fire.

Losing Morrissey in the first period to an injury meant a significant increase in icetime for fellow blueliners Neal Pionk and Dylan Samberg. But the two held down the fort for their injured running mate, extending the Jets' playoff season so he could return to the fold.

With 1:56 to play and Hellebuyck on the bench for the extra attacker, Vlad Namestnikov scored on the six-on-five advantage, cutting the Blues' lead to just one goal. With the puck dropped once again to resume play for the final two minutes, fans remained upright and hopeful as the seconds quickly began ticking off the clock.

A botched one-timer at the point from Nikolaj Ehlers found its way to Lowry. He gave it right back to his speedy winger. This time, Ehlers fed Connor cross-ice, whose one-time shot was deflected perfectly under the bar by Cole Perfetti, tying the game with just 1.6 seconds left on the clock.

Canada Life Centre had never been louder; it was utter pandemonium. In a stunned combination of shock and awe, most fans didn't even leave their seats for refills during the intermission as the two clubs went off to their respective dressing rooms for overtime – that's saying something!

The first period of extra time solved nothing, but with 3:50 to play in the second overtime period, Lowry redirected home a Neal Pionk point shot, extending Winnipeg's season and waving goodbye to the Blues in the process.

"It was very difficult to be out of that game, but the guys stepped up," Morrissey said postgame. "Obviously, five D going into as many minutes as they all played, up front, it was incredible to watch. I wish I was out there to feel that excitement. I was so proud of the team and the guys for what they were able to do and the resilience they showed with 1.6 seconds left. It was amazing. The heroics and every guy stepping up to get us to the next round, I feel very grateful that I get to be back on the ice with the guys here and able to chase this playoff dream here."

The parties in Winnipeg continued well into the night, but the fateful task of handling the Dallas Stars in the Central Division Final quickly set in.

The Jets were unable to contain the red-hot Mikko Rantanen in Game 1, falling 3-2 to Dallas, before picking up a 4-0 win two days later. The road woes continued in Texas, with the Stars and goaltender Jake Oettinger proving to be too much to handle. The tragedy of the untimely death of Scheifele's father, Brad, added an additional heartbreak to the letdown of the Game 6 loss in Dallas.

The storybook ending came to a crashing halt in the second round, but the miraculous Game 7 comeback against St. Louis will live on in the hearts and minds of Jets fans for a lifetime.

Set to receive their Presidents' Trophy and celebratory banner, the Jets will look back fondly upon the 2024-25 season, but their disappointment in a job left unfinished will surely fuel a deeper hunger for stronger playoff showings in the years to come.

***GAME ON* PHOTOGRAPHER SCOTT STROH**

***GAME ON* PHOTOGRAPHER JAMES CAREY LAUDER**

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The Filipino GUY LAFLEUR

HIS LONG HAIR FLOWS OUT THE BACK OF HIS HELMET WHILE HE SPEEDS AROUND THE ICE IN HIS WINNIPEG THRASHERS JERSEY. TRACK STAR AND SPEEDY FORWARD KAIDEN LANTICAN IS KNOWN TO HIS TEAMMATES AS THE FILIPINO GUY LAFLEUR.

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by James Carey Lauder

FIRST SHIFT

Kaiden Lantican's teammates like to call him, "The Filipino Guy Lafleur."

It's not just the flowing hockey hair that explodes out the back of his helmet as he skates, it's also the speed with which he gets from one end of the rink to the other. Like the great Hall of Famer, Lafleur, Lantican is all about speed.

"Well, that's one way of putting it, with the flowing hair," said his coach, Ken McInnis with a laugh. "He's such a great kid. He's one of those kids that always has a smile on his face. He gets to the rink wearing a smile and has that kind of infectious personality that you want to be around. He's a very positive kid who works hard and is one of the fastest players in the U17 league and certainly one of the fastest players, if not the fastest player, on our team.

"He is key on our No. 1 penalty kill unit, he's in the top of the league in shorthanded goals, just because of his speed. He becomes a threat to score on any PK. That's been effective for us. He's just a hard-working, fast, tough-to-handle kid that plays the game the right way. And he's excellent in the room."

In a province with a growing number of talented players from our Filipino Community, Lantican's heritage has not been any hindrance to his hockey career. In fact, his dad John, an Aviation Mechanic at Standard Aero, has loved the game for most of his life.

"I started playing hockey when I was nine," John explained. "My dad put me in skating when I was seven. I started with what is now Valour Road Community Centre. They started a hockey program at Tec Voc High School, so I played there in Grade 12.

"So, we put Kaiden in skating at River East Community Centre when he was around six years old. Then I got him into rec hockey when he was eight. He played house league and then at nine, he made 9A1 Raiders and then he made U13 AA with the Rebels and then U15 AAA with Thrashers Gold. He kept improving and made U15 AAA with Thrashers

Blue and then this last year, he made U17 Thrashers."

Kaiden has become a better player with every passing season and there is definitely a reason for his improvement. His parents made sure he could skate well before allowing him to pursue organized hockey. As a result, his speed has always given him an advantage.

"Before he started hockey, we just focussed strictly on skating," John said. "We went to City of Winnipeg's Parks and Rec skating lessons and then we went to Excessive Speed Hockey and they totally changed the way he skated. He skated with them for years. These days, he volunteers with the Winnipeg Jets First Shift Program and is one of the on-ice coaches."

When asked, Kaiden concurred with his dad.

"I didn't start playing hockey at eight years old," Kaiden explained. "I started taking skating lessons before that and my dad was really into hockey. I started playing in House League in A2 and kept going from there – A1, AA and then AAA. I played spring hockey when I was younger.

"My speed is my game. Just getting pucks deep and forechecking hard."

That sounds familiar, but really, what's with this "Filipino Guy Lafleur" handle? After all, Kaiden is a 16-year-old Grade 10 student and none of his teammates were born while Lafleur was alive.

"Ha! Yeah, that's what they call me," he said laughing. "My hair's pretty long. I had a Mohawk for a while. I just kept letting my hair grow."

His dad laughed and agreed. "He had a Mohawk when he was younger and never cut it," said John. "That's always been his style."

It's a style that is impossible to miss. When you watch him play, you immediately see a small, fast kid with good hands and incredible quickness.

Kaiden, who carries an average in the high 90s at Maples Collegiate, wants to continue to play hockey for as long as he can.

"Hopefully, as a 17-year-old, I'll play U18 AAA next year," Kaiden said. "I just had a really fun year. We had a good team but finished third in the standings. I'll do spring camps this year and I'll run track for my high school. I played volleyball this year and I went to provincials in track last year. I'm a sprinter. I run the 100 metres and relays.

"I want to see where hockey takes me. I just want to play the best I can and hopefully play junior. I'd really like to play NCAA hockey. I got pretty interested in that after watching North Dakota and Minnesota State. I loved it. It was such a great environment there. Hopefully, my academics will help me."

Like so many good young players, Kaiden's parents Myla and John, have been instrumental in his love for the game.

"When it comes to hockey, my parents are really important," he said. "They keep motivating me to do my best. They keep encouraging me. My dad is my biggest role model and my mom is my biggest supporter. My dad was a hockey player and hockey is big in our family.

"I fell in love with the game slowly. At first, when I was a kid, I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I heard my dad played hockey and he showed me a thing or two and it grew from there."

Kaiden's coach with the Thrashers, Kent McInnis, is a retired police officer who has become one of the hardest-working hockey coaches in Manitoba. Not only is he head coach of the Thrashers but he's also the assistant coach of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League's Winnipeg Blues.

McInnis believes Lantican has a chance to move up to the Jr. A level as long as he's prepared to do the work.

"Like anybody else, it will depend on him. It depends how far he wants to take it. He's not the biggest guy on the ice, but he's fast and has learned how to protect himself. This was my second year coaching him and he's had a couple of concussions just because he's so fast. He gets moving so fast, so we worked on ways that he could better protect himself on the ice and he got really good at doing that. He gained a lot of confidence from not getting hurt.

"It also depends on what he wants. He's a multi-sport athlete. He's an outstanding volleyball player, as well. He certainly has the speed to play Jr. A, it's within his grasp. Like everything else in this game, it depends on how hard he wants to work for it."

THE LANTICAN FAMILY: FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, MYLA, KALIYAH, JOHN AND KAIDEN

JAYDEN (LEFT) AND
KAYLEN MATEYCHUK

FIRST SHIFT

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by James Carey Lauder and courtesy of Preet Sroay

DIVERSITY ON ICE

THERE IS NOTHING BETTER THAN WINNING A CHAMPIONSHIP. UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO WIN ONE WITH YOUR BROTHER.

Back on March 12th, two of the finest hockey players of South Asian and Ukrainian heritage, Jayden and Kaylen Mateychuk, helped the Shaftesbury High School Titans sweep the Centre Scolaire Léo-Rémillard Renards in a best-of-three championship series to claim the Winnipeg High School Hockey League's Winnipeg Free Press Division crown.

In the deciding game, Jayden Mateychuk had one of the goals as Shaftesbury beat Léo-Rémillard 6-4 to claim its fourth WHSHL title and first since 2019. The Titans were undefeated 8-0 in the playoff run and Jayden was named one of the Winnipeg Free Press Playoff Stars of the week.

"We had a great group," said Jayden. "A lot of my friends who I have always hung out with played on the team. There were some other guys who played AAA, as well, and we just all agreed to have fun together in our last year, so we put together a pretty good team."

OK, so obviously everyone's question is: How are the Mateychuk Brothers South Asian players?

Well, it's simple actually. At least, the Reader's Digest version is simple. Preet Sroay and Bryan Mateychuk were classmates in Dental College at the University of Manitoba. They became good friends, got married in 2003 and along came Jayden in 2007 and Kaylen in 2008. Preet's parents immigrated from India in the early 1970s and Bryan's great-grandparents, both paternal and maternal, immigrated from Ukraine in the early 1900s. All settled in Manitoba.

"They are equally proud of their Indian and Ukrainian roots," said Preet proudly. "Both Bryan and I were born in Canada, but feel that it is important to immerse the kids in both cultures. They love their Nani's samosas as much as their Baba's perogies."

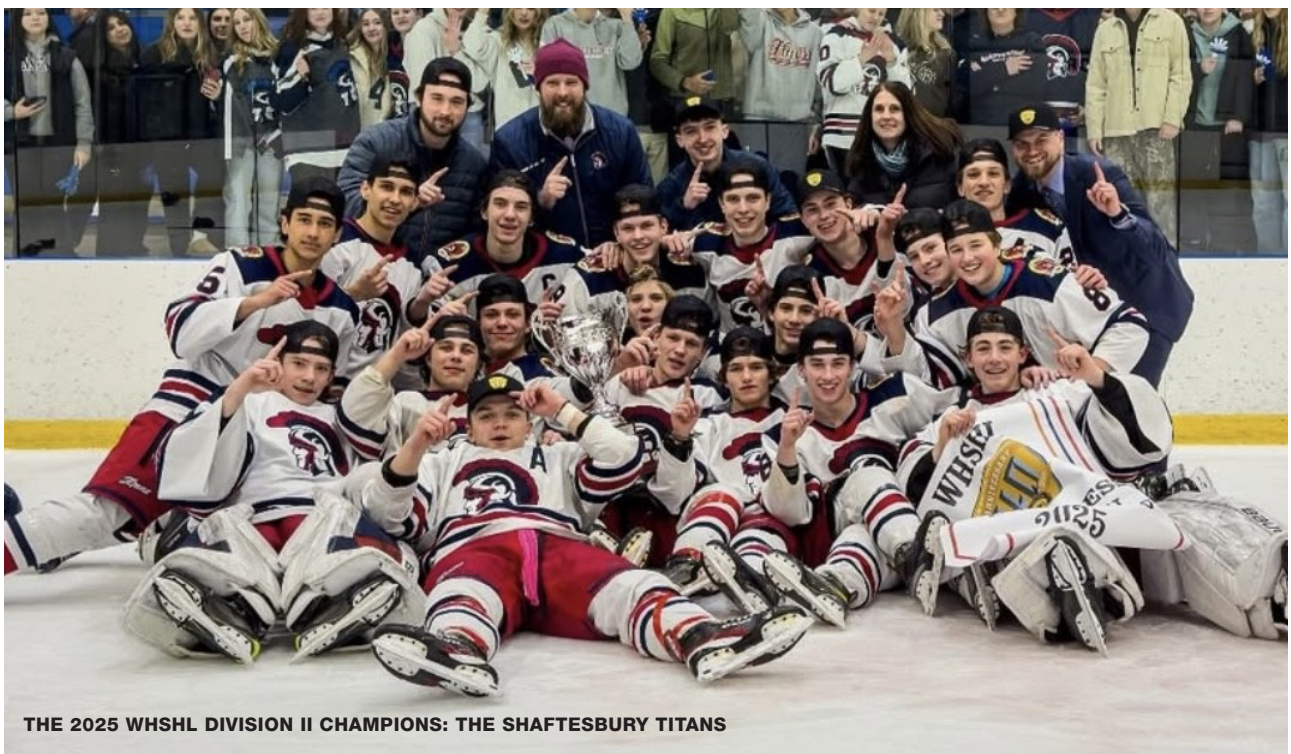
Not surprisingly, both young men do very well in school.

"That's their mom's requirement," said Preet with a laugh. "Throughout their high school years, they have maintained a ninety-five per cent average on top of participating in multiple sports. Dad takes care of the hockey and mom their education."

Cousins of Columbus Blue Jackets' defenceman Denton Mateychuk (Bryan and Denton's dad Jason are cousins), both Jayden and Kaylen are not just hockey players but solid multi-sport athletes.

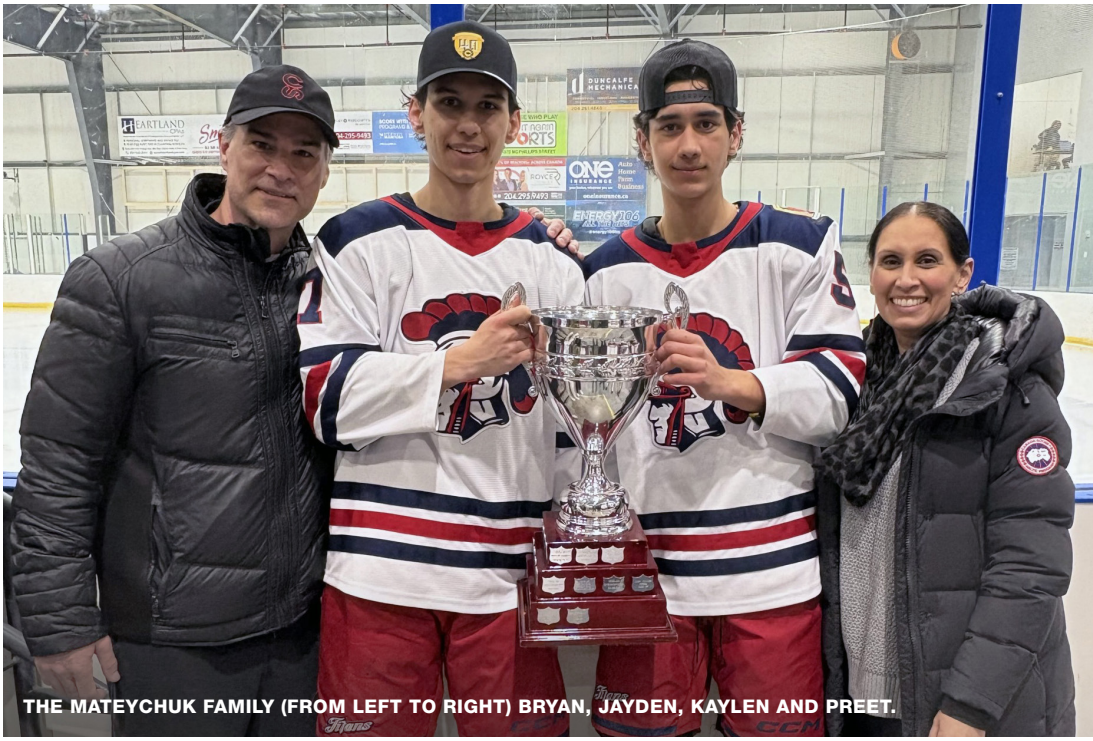
"Jayden also played for South End United, as a P1 soccer player," said Preet, "he's been to the USA Cup twice with the team." He plays both indoor and outdoor soccer for Shaftesbury and rec league in the summer. He's trying something new and joining the school lacrosse team this year. For both boys, this is more than just hockey. Kaylen played soccer in his younger years but enjoys playing community and high school basketball now. The boys are on the high school golf team, and both competed in the high school ice fishing derby."

They are also committed to community service. Their A2 team was runner-up for the Good Deeds Cup in 2020 as they helped raise $18,000 for Reese Ketler, the St. Vital Victorias player who sustained a serious spinal cord injury during a hockey game. They have volunteered and participated



THE 2025 WHSHL DIVISION II CHAMPIONS: THE SHAFTESBURY TITANS

“THEY LOVE THEIR NANI’S SAMOSAS AS MUCH AS THEIR BABA’S PEROGIES.”



THE MATEYCHUK FAMILY (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) BRYAN, JAYDEN, KAYLEN AND PREET.

in the Mike Pritchard Memorial Golf Tournament since 2021, worked with the Main Street project and delivered Food Hampers. They are good in school, strong athletes and dedicated to their community.

And both young men found hockey rather naturally. As their mom noted, when she was growing up in Winnipeg, only a handful of young South Asian boys played hockey. In fact, no one on the Sroay side had ever played ice hockey before Jayden and Kaylen. The boys took to the game quickly and with ease.

“I started at nine, I think we both did,” said Jayden. “Our dad played high level hockey his entire life, he always watched hockey and followed hockey. Growing up, with our friends, we were just surrounded by it. We learned to skate at a very young age. My first two years of hockey, I played A3 and then I played A2 for the next two years and then the pandemic hit. We missed a year there.”

“After that I tried out for AA and made the Twins. I was assistant captain and ended up winning Forward of the Year. Then, the next year, I played for Shaftesbury for a year and was nominated for Rookie of the Year. However, in my Grade 11 year, I played AAA for the Winnipeg Bruins and that was definitely a big jump.”

“In Grade 12, I made the choice to play high school with my brother and we had lots of fun. And it turned out to be a championship season. We had a really good year.”

Jayden’s plan is to attend the University of Manitoba Faculty of Science this fall, but his hockey future is still uncertain. Although, he has been invited to and attended the Manitoba Junior Hockey League camps of the Niverville Nighthawks, Winkler Flyers, and Selkirk Steelers.

“I’m still trying to make up my mind about what I want to do,” he said. “The MMJHL is a strong option that I’ve been thinking about. One of my buddies got called up and he said that one of the things the Hawks’ coaches really emphasize is both doing well in school and playing hockey.”

Jayden started skating at Century Arena at age five while Kaylen was three. Mom picked up the Leisure Guide, found a slate of skating lessons that would work for the family and soon both boys were on the ice. Introduction to Hockey through the Rink Hockey Academy at the age of 7 and 8 was next. They both started playing organized hockey with the South Winnipeg Kings at age 9.

“In my first year, I played A3 and won Most Improved Player,” said Kaylen. “So, in my second year, I jumped to A2 and played three years of A2 – 2018, 2019 and 2021 – of course, we missed 2020 because of COVID. Then I moved up to A1 for two years and this year I played high school.”

“Jayden and I played together in A2, so playing together this season was nothing new. And it was really good fun. Our team, overall, was just a bunch of really good teammates. We worked together and we connected early in the season. The few AAA guys we had, provided help too. We were just a hard-working group of guys who enjoyed being out there.”

For Kaylen, nothing could beat the feeling of winning a championship and it’s the reason why he already has next year’s hockey season figured out.

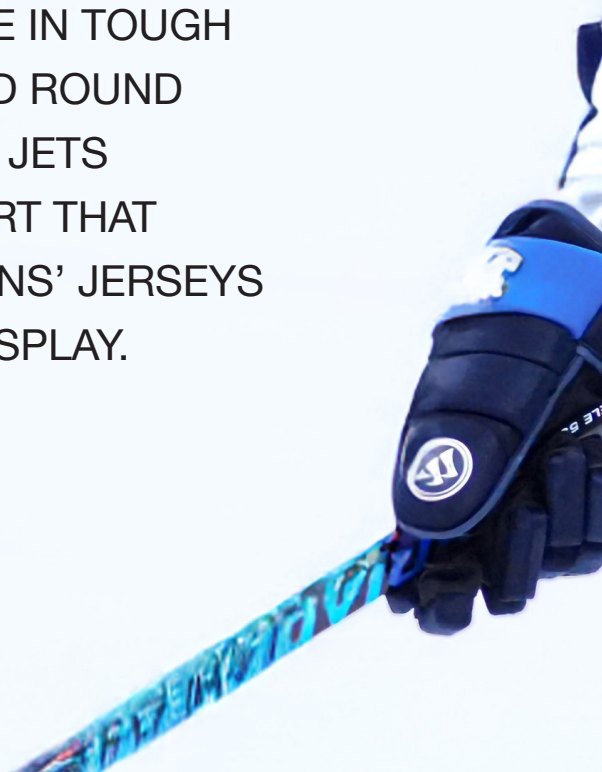
“It was awesome when the final buzzer went,” he said. “I can’t compare the feeling to anything else.”

“I’m going to play high school again next year -- try to go back-to-back.”

A HEART-WARMING DISPLAY

THE HOCKEY COMMUNITY IS KNOWN FOR BANDING TOGETHER OFF THE ICE IN TOUGH TIMES, AND DURING THE SECOND ROUND SERIES BETWEEN THE WINNIPEG JETS AND DALLAS STARS, THE SUPPORT THAT TRANSCENDS THE LOGOS ON FANS' JERSEYS WAS PUT ON HEARTWARMING DISPLAY.

BY JOHNSTON HALL
Photos by Scott Stroh and courtesy of the Winnipeg Jets



"WE HAVE REALLY BEEN BLOWN AWAY BY THE OVERWHELMING SUPPORT AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY SHOWN BY HOCKEY FANS ACROSS THIS LEAGUE"

MARK SCHEIFELE VOLUNTEERING WITH HIS WJHA MINOR TEAM.

Game 6 of the 2025 Stanley Cup Playoffs already held massive weight as the Jets faced elimination, down three games to two. But then it was announced that Jets centre Mark Scheifele's dad, Brad, unexpectedly passed the night before.

On-ice rivalries set aside, Dallas fans started a groundswell of support by donating to charities Scheifele supported, including the Jets' official charity, the True North Youth Foundation (TNYF). A nod to the star centre's number, $55, $5.55 and even $5,500 donations quickly added up, and just three hours after lifelong Stars fan Ryan Grimes of Brockville, Ont. put out the initial call in a Dallas Stars subreddit, $30,000 was raised.

"We have really been blown away by the overwhelming support and sense of community shown by hockey fans across this league, and particularly in Dallas and across Texas, along with our own Jets fans," said TNYF Executive Director Dwayne Green. "We shouldn't be surprised, and we really aren't because this is just what the hockey community is all about and what is at the heart of this sport. But we are extremely grateful, as we know the powerful impact these funds will have on youth in our community in Brad Scheifele's memory."

The TNYF runs three programs dedicated to enriching youth with physical, social and emotional skill sets they can continue to build on to achieve success in school and beyond. The Winnipeg Jets Hockey Academy (WJHA) uses hockey to engage youth in their school and community and provides robust off-ice programming that enhances academic success with the ultimate goal of graduating high school and contributing to their community. Project 11 is a school-based proactive mental wellness program for K-12 students that works to give kids tools to build resilience and overcome stress while also destigmatizing the conversation around mental health. Camp Manitou is a 42-acre four-season camp that provides outdoor education and adventure and subsidizes participation for more than half of its campers and groups.

"Mark has always been supportive of our work and over the past few seasons has mentored one of our WJHA minor hockey teams, attending practices and games when he can between his own demanding schedule of travel and play. For them to see someone of Mark's level of talent, success and drive, his participation is truly inspirational for these kids – some of whom have some pretty tough hills to climb off the ice."

Four days after the movement started, the TNYF had received more 1,100 donations from across the United States and Canada, totalling more than $80,000 and including $5,500 each from the Dallas Stars organization and Jets partner Skip the Dishes. Donations continued in the days that followed.

"We are honoured to be stewards of these funds and want to dedicate them to something special that will be fitting for Brad's legacy, and for the entire Scheifele family."

A scholarship has been discussed but Green said the Scheifeles' involvement will be key to shaping how the funds are specifically used, giving thought to something that would be most meaningful for Brad.

Fittingly, Scheifele scored one for dad, kicking off the scoring in Game 6 and giving the Jets a second period 1-0 lead. But it would be the Jets' lone goal as Dallas ultimately ended their season shortly into overtime.

"It's always tough when your season comes to an end, and it was an especially heavy ending for the team, and for our fans, but we are heartened by this outpouring of kindness, and we know Mark and his family will be touched as well," said Green. "This kind of generosity puts the game in perspective and shows us the effort we give off the ice is where it counts the most."

JETS HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT

2025 SUMMER PROGRAMS

JULY AND AUGUST 2025

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hockey for all centre

THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF EXERCISE ON MENTAL HEALTH

In today's fast-paced world, stress is an almost unavoidable part of life. While some stress is natural, and even beneficial in small doses, chronic stress can take a serious toll on both our physical and mental well-being. One of the most effective, accessible, and scientifically supported ways to manage stress and enhance mental health is through regular physical exercise.

As athletes, we often strictly attribute the benefits of exercise to the physical aspects and don't consider the mental benefits. Exercise acts as a powerful natural antidepressant. Physical activity stimulates the release of endorphins, our body's natural painkillers/antidepressants, that help elevate our mood and create a sense of well-being. It also promotes the release of neurotransmitters such as dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin, which are essential for regulating our mood and alleviating symptoms of anxiety and depression. In fact, numerous studies have shown that consistent exercise can be as effective as medication in treating mild to moderate depression.

When looking at how we can regulate stress, exercise provides both physiological and psychological benefits. Physically, it reduces the level of stress hormones like cortisol in the body. It also increases cardiovascular health and improves sleep, which are two critical components that support the body's ability to recover from stress. Psychologically, engaging in exercise, especially as part of a structured routine, can provide a sense of control, achievement, and purpose. Activities that require focus, such as lifting weights, yoga, running, swimming, or team sports, to list a few examples, encourage present-moment awareness and can also serve as a form of active mindfulness or meditation.

Exercise also develops emotional resilience. When we regularly challenge ourselves physically, whether by lifting heavier weights, running longer distances, or mastering a new skill, we build confidence and develop a greater tolerance for discomfort. This carries over into everyday life, helping us handle adversity and stress with a more resilient mindset.

The mental health benefits of exercise aren't exclusive to high-intensity workouts or long sessions. One of the great disservices in the fitness industry is making people feel like their way is the only way and if you aren't doing it that way, you are doing it wrong. This could not be further from the truth. Even short bursts of movement, like a brisk 10-minute walk, can result in immediate improvements in mood and a positive regulation of stress levels. The key is consistency and finding activities that are enjoyable and sustainable for you. There are a million ways to move and exercise correctly. If you find something you enjoy and is working for you, that's great - Keep going!

Incorporating regular physical activity into our daily lives is not just about improving physical fitness, it's a vital tool for maintaining mental health. By moving our bodies, we put ourselves in a better position for positive outcomes by regulating stress, and building a more resilient, healthier self.

Until next time, Strength, Courage, Hustle, Commitment

TYREL BAUER OF THE MANITOBA MOOSE WON BOTH THE 2024-25 RICHARD BUE AWARD FOR SELFLESS SERVICE TO THE TEAM AND THE EPRA JULIAN KLYMKIW COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD FOR THE COUNTLESS HOURS OF VOLUNTEER WORK HE PROVIDES TO THE COMMUNITY FOR NUMEROUS CAUSES, INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH. MOST RECENTLY, HE WAS NAMED WINNER OF THE IOA/AMERICAN SPECIALTY AHL MAN OF THE YEAR AWARD FOR HIS OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY.

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ESSO ICE LAB

JETS HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT

BY CHRISTINA KLYSH
Photos By Carlos Lopez

JHD COACHES SELECTED TO LEAD TEAM MANITOBA INTO WHL CUP

ALTHOUGH THEY'VE WORKED TOGETHER FOR QUITE SOME TIME, JHD COACHES DEVIN HIMPE AND ANDY KOLLAR HAVE NEVER COACHED A TEAM TOGETHER. THAT WILL CHANGE THIS YEAR AS THE TWO OUTSTANDING COACHES WILL LEAD MANITOBA'S U16 TEAM INTO THE WHL CUP IN OCTOBER.

The calibre of coaching has always been high for the Jets Hockey Development (JHD) team at hockey for all centre. But the recent selection of two JHD coaches to the coaching staff of the Manitoba boys U16 Program of Excellence has added even more credentials to the coaching team.

Despite working together for the past several years, Devin Himpe, JHD Head Instructor, and Andy Kollar, Head Instructor of the Esso Ice Lab, have never coached a team with one another. Now they're coming together to coach the U16 team that's headed to the 2025 WHL Cup this October.

"It's been a goal of mine to work my way to a point where I feel comfortable and confident to go for the head coach role," said Himpe, who was an assistant coach and video coach for the U16 team before being selected as head coach this year. "It was a great accomplishment for myself, and as much as I want to celebrate it as much as I can, once I knew I got it, it was straight to work for me."

Himpe's first task was rounding out his coaching staff, and when it came to finding a goalie coach, choosing Kollar was a no-brainer.

"I know he works hard for these kids, and I know he's going to do as much as he possibly can to help in our goalie selection," said Himpe, who noted how difficult it will be to choose only two goalies from the many talented goaltenders trying out. "We're lucky to have

his expertise and I'm excited to be able to work with him."

"I really respect Devin as a coach and a human, so when he asked if I would help, it was a pretty easy decision for me to make," said Kollar, who is coaching the U16 goalies for the first time. Kollar spends most of his time running sessions at the Ice Lab, making his availability to coach teams rare. However, he's already got a connection to the team in working one-on-one time with many of the goalies who will be trying out.

"Through the Ice Lab I've gotten to work with a lot of these kids on their own and have seen them grow to where they're at right now," said Kollar. "I'm very honoured to be a part of this and I hope with my experiences, background and knowledge, I can give the kids an advantage or some help in their journey for them to be as successful as they can."

Getting the team ready for the WHL Cup this October is going to be a long process. Tryouts begin in April with 116 players from across the province coming to hockey for all centre. Participants will be split into teams so the coaching staff can assess who they are as players on and off the ice before selecting the top 40 going on to the next round.

As someone who was once in their shoes, Himpe wants to help players get to the next level.

"It was always something that I wanted to strive for, to get to a point where I feel that I can be effective and helpful with these players getting to the highest level possible."

One of the ways he plans to do this as head coach is through forming relationships with each of his players to help them reach their goals and develop to the best of their ability.

ANDY KOLLAR WITH TORONTO SCEPTRES AND TEAM CANADA GOALTENDER KRISTEN CAMPBELL

"I'm a very personable coach. I like to know my players and see their journey from top 100 all the way to Team Manitoba," said Himpe. "As a head coach I don't want to be standoffish, I want to talk to my players and get to know them and see their progression and development from start to finish."

During a few weekends in the summer, players will participate in practices, games, interviews, and team building events until the final team is narrowed down for this October's WHL Cup in Red Deer, Alta. The WHL Cup happens every year, with the exception of Canada Games years, and includes teams with the top players from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. Many of the players participating will be scouted by the WHL, which has produced some of the top players in the NHL.

Both coaches are looking forward to competing in the tournament.

"I'm excited to see how the mindset changes, or doesn't change, at a high-level tournament," said Kollar. "I think one of the biggest aspects I can add to our players' toolbox will be the mental side of it. I think that's the biggest part that changes through a high-level tournament, where pressure or mindset could take over in a negative or positive way and affect their skill set."

"I'm just excited to see how the players develop and how we can see them go from good to better players within a system and a higher level of competition," said Himpe. "It will be exciting to see how we do against other provinces."

While it may be their first times in these specific roles, coaching with Jets Hockey Development has prepared Kollar and Himpe to take on the challenge.

"I think working at the Ice Lab has helped me prepare to partner up with whoever the goalies are and create a strong bond," said Kollar. During the past 11 years he's spent at the Ice Lab, Kollar has learned to tailor his coaching to how each player learns and reacts.

"Being able to learn from and talk with the really good coaches that we have here and to be in hockey day in and day out has only helped me understand what we need to do for these players to help them develop further," said Himpe. "We're skills coaches, but at the end of the day we're trying to build ourselves up and have a better understanding of how we can be an effective coach for the players, whether it be from a skills development side or from a team systems side."

Along with coaching the provincial team, Kollar and Himpe will be running a variety of JHD and Esso Ice Lab camps and programs this summer. To learn more about different options for summer training, visit hockeyforallcentre.com.

JHD COACH DEVIN HIMPE EXPLAINING A DRILL TO HIS PLAYERS

Esso ICE LAB

2025 SUMMER CAMPS

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RISING STARS
JULY 14-18

PROSPECTS
JULY 21-25

ELITE
JULY 28 TO AUGUST 1

hockey for all centre

FROM ANTLERS TO WINGS

BY DANIEL FINK
Photos by Jonathan Kozub

WITH 25 SEASONS OF MANITOBA MOOSE HOCKEY, THERE'S CERTAINLY A MEMORABLE LIST OF ALUMNI THAT CONTINUES TO LENGTHEN EACH YEAR. AS THE TEAM CONCLUDES THE FIRST DECADE OF ITS SECOND ITERATION IN MANITOBA, NOWADAYS FANS DON'T HAVE TO GO FAR TO SEE RECENT ALUMNI IN ACTION.

CONNOR HELLEBUYCK

KYLE CONNOR

DYLAN SAMBERG

Those Moose grads just move down the hall to the Winnipeg Jets, often becoming crucial contributors for one of the NHL's top outfits.

Established players like Connor Hellebuyck, Josh Morrissey and Kyle Connor fine-tuned their pro-game with the Moose before making the jump to the world's best league. Emerging stars like Dylan Samberg and Cole Perfetti took their first strides in the professional ranks while wearing antlers.

"It was a big part of my career, my journey," said Connor, the 2022 recipient of the NHL's Lady Byng Memorial Trophy and former Moose team MVP. "Obviously there were a lot of good teammates I played with on the Moose and a lot of good memories. You can see other guys in the organization today taking that step just like I did."

LEARNING THE ROPES

It's a consistent theme in speaking with Jets who passed through the Moose on their journey to becoming NHLers. Their time in the AHL helped prepare them both on and off the ice for the rest of their career playing at the highest level of the sport. For many of those players, the lessons learned off the ice were just as important as what they learned on it.

"I think I got to learn how the off-ice portion works and really be on your own for everything," explained two-time Vezina Trophy winner Hellebuyck. "You have to figure out your own plan and kind of get your whole life together because you're living in an apartment by yourself for the first time and not a dorm. It's kind of figuring things out."

On the ice, playing in the AHL can be a time for players to sort out their role in the professional game. Whether prospects come from North American junior hockey, collegiate ranks or from Europe, many held specific roles throughout their younger years. As they come into their first seasons of pro hockey those roles tend to shift.

Before playing 400 games in the NHL, Mason Appleton started out playing on Manitoba's fourth line. He went on to climb the depth chart and set a franchise rookie record with 66 points (22G, 44A) in 76 games. Appleton was named the AHL Rookie of the Year, as well as an AHL First-Team All-Star.

"Growing your game and growing into a bigger role, you don't just go from A to Z," Appleton laid out. "There are a lot of steps and different milestones you have to hit before you can get to where you really feel like you deserve to be. For me the AHL was kind of learning who I was as a player and then growing into my role. Then kind of the same thing in the NHL."

COMING UP TOGETHER

So much of team success in sports is rooted within the relationships between players. Many of the current Winnipeg Jets started forming lasting bonds during their time with the Moose. Take Perfetti and Samberg as an example. The pair were rookies with Manitoba during a unique 2020-21 COVID bubble season.

"It was definitely huge for me. Just getting that first taste of what pro hockey is going to be like," said Samberg. "We had a very good, warm, welcoming group and it was pretty tight knit. Obviously, it was a weird time with COVID and

everything, but we became closer because we were able to spend more time at the rink."

Samberg and Perfetti went on to live together for the next three years as they worked through the transition to becoming NHL players. The relationships built through those early seasons helped the young players integrate into the Jets locker room.

"They all helped the transition feel a lot smoother," reminisced Perfetti, who posted 41 points (15G, 26A) in 49 career AHL games. "I felt really comfortable once I made it to the Jets. I had some familiar faces and some guys I already had a relationship with."

But it doesn't have to take a global pandemic to form those bonds. There are multiple waves of players on the Jets who have played together on the Moose. Though their experience was a little more conventional, it still marked the start of those important friendships.

"I look at the guys I played with my first couple years in pro hockey. It was Adam Lowry, Connor Hellebuyck, Josh Morrissey, all those guys," listed goaltender Eric Comrie, who holds multiple Moose goaltending records. "They're still here and still part of the Jets, and to be a part of that is special to me. We kind of grew up together, became pros together, became men together. So, it was fun to be a part of that journey."

LEAVING THEIR MARK

As you might expect, players moving on to the NHL tend to leave a lasting impression on the Moose. Current Winnipeg Jets players claim positions all over the Moose record book. Whether it's Comrie's franchise wins record, Connor's rookie goals record or Appleton's previously mentioned rookie points mark. That legacy is something Appleton doesn't take for granted.

"It's very special. Talking about 25 seasons, that's a lot of good hockey players. The credit obviously goes to the team we had that year too. I think we had a very good team and a lot of players who went to play in the NHL. It's cool to hold a record, especially still being in the same organization."

Even beyond records and statistics these alumni have made their etchings in a legacy now spanning 25 seasons with the Moose. Comrie was one of the faces of the franchise for parts of six seasons with Manitoba. He's proud to look back on his work in the Moose crease and joining the alumni who came before.

"You look at the names in the past, the goaltenders who have been there through the organization and to be a part of it is special. The Moose have a rich history from back then and it's going to continue going forward because they have a lot of good players coming into the organization now."

With 25 seasons of Moose hockey in Winnipeg, the alumni list continues to grow and gets more impressive every year. As the Moose move into their second quarter-century, it's exciting to think on which players may join that illustrious group and what they'll accomplish while wearing antlers.

Lock in your seats for the 2025-26 Manitoba Moose season today with a ticket membership – learn more at moosehockey.com/memberships.

ERIC COMRIE

MASON APPLETON

A PEOPLE-FIRST APPROACH

MAX GARDINER IS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF OUR JETS HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT COACHES WHO SUPPORT PLAYERS BOTH ON AND OFF THE ICE

BY CHRISTINA KLYSH
Photos By Carlos Lopez

Max Gardiner believes in putting people first. This is the coaching philosophy he brings to every practice and game, whether he's working with a player during a Jets Hockey Development (JHD) session or coaching the Oak Park varsity boy's hockey team.

"There needs to be a relationship between the coach and the player that is more than just superficial and only about hockey," said Gardiner. "There needs to be an understanding of where they come from and what their background's like, so you can be more in tune with players once they get on the ice."

Since he started coaching full time with JHD two and a half years ago, Gardiner approaches each training session trying to balance challenging his players while making sure they don't feel discouraged.

"Whenever I think about a practice or different skills that we teach, the first thing I generally think about is, is this helping a player, does this apply to a game scenario, and is this something that they're going to be able to accomplish," said Gardiner.

His favourite skill to teach is handling the puck along the boards – it's a skill he knows a lot about having studied and presented on it at a Hockey Canada's skills seminar.

"With the way the game is now, it's a lot faster and there's a lot less time to make plays. We have to find a way to get the puck to another teammate without going directly to them, so it's something that applies to every player at every level."

Gardiner played hockey for Charleswood from the age of 8, moving on to Oak Park High School and the Charleswood Hawks in the MMJHL. He now coaches Oak Park's varsity boys' team, which won the provincial championship last year as the lowest seed going into the tournament.

JETS HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT

hockey for all centre

"We got on a bit of a roll and won all our games, so it was exciting since we weren't a favourite by any means," said Gardiner, who looks back on the championship as one of his proudest coaching moments. Motivating his players to reach their potential, whether that's mastering a new skill or becoming provincial champions, is something that Gardiner takes pride in as a coach at Oak Park and JHD.

His goal is always for his players to achieve growth on the ice. In coaching the JHD summer programs, players' year over year growth is evident and he finds it rewarding to see players return having achieved the goals they set out the year before.

"There tends to be a massive jump by the time they come next summer, whether that be making the team they wanted to, producing more, or having more points, which is super rewarding to see as a coach," said Gardiner.

Off-season training provides an opportunity for players to focus on improving their skills, and Gardiner particularly enjoys impacting players' personal improvement.

"During the season with your team, more time is spent on team systems and concepts, but summer is a time where you can focus on your personal game and things you struggle with," said Gardiner. "I think it's important that kids, especially younger kids, are playing multiple sports or taking a break from sports, but summer can also be a time to develop individually."

JHD has a wide variety of summer camps for everyone from U7 to professional players to work on their skills. Gardiner and the other JHD coaches develop a curriculum for each program and rotate coaching the camps, working with players off all levels. The diversity of coaching skill sets is something Gardiner believes makes the JHD team stand out.

"All the coaches know how to work with five and six-year-olds, right up to players who have been playing for 20 years. You learn different ways to explain things and how to simplify things for younger players or be more detailed with the older players."

JHD coaches are also there to support players if they have any concerns about their game. As part of his coaching approach, Gardiner makes an intentional effort to connect with his players off the ice to check in and see how they're feeling.

"Having someone to talk to, especially if they are going through rough patches in their season, which is going to happen to everyone, is important," said Gardiner. "Players can reach out to any of the JHD coaches if they have questions or want a different perspective."

Gardiner has advice for players who are interested in training over the summer.

"You can develop as a player on your own, regardless of the skill level on the ice. If you are diligent and focusing on what you should be doing and what we're teaching, you'll develop as a player."

For more information on Jets Hockey Development 2025 summer programs, visit hockeyforallcentre.com.

JETS HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT

2025 SUMMER DAY CAMPS

RUNS FROM JULY 7 TO AUGUST 29

OFF-ICE SESSIONS INCLUDED WITH FOCUS FITNESS

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- POWER SKATING
- ALL FEMALE
- DEFENSE CAMP
- CHECKING (BATTLE + COMPETE)
- SUMMER SKILLS

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hockey for all centre

CAPTAIN SYDNEY BYLE WITH THE CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY AND SOPHIA REIMER WITH HER GOLD MEDAL

SILVERTIPS ARE GOLD

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Rusty Barton

Katrina Johnston never gave up hope. Even when her team trailed 3-1 with less than five minutes remaining to play in Game 4 of the Manitoba Women's Junior Hockey League championship series, the Silvertips backup goalie (for the night) believed in her teammates.

"It was amazing," said Johnston, a Kinesiology student at the University of Manitoba when she's not playing goal for the 'Tips. "I had a feeling that it's not over yet and we have time. I felt everyone else was thinking the same thing and no one else was feeling down. It was 3-1 but we believed we could still do it. When we started scoring, I thought, 'OK, this is pretty good,' and I was hoping we could go to overtime and when Raya (Hrankowski) scored that fourth goal, we just lost it. It was like 'We're up 4-3. We got it!' It was pretty crazy."

When you talk about thrilling victories, especially in potential championship games, this one was up there with the best of them. The Silvertips, the No. 2 team in the MWJHL during the 2024-25 campaign (15-5-5), were considered underdogs against the Northern Stars, the first-place team in the MWJHL with a tremendous record of 19-4-2.

Back on March 22, it was Game 4 in the best-of-five final after the 'Tips won the opener 2-1 and then Game 2, 3-0. The Stars bounced back to win Game 3, 4-1, and it looked very much like the favourites were going to even the series.

In Game 4, the Stars led 3-1 with about four minutes to play in regulation time when the Silvertips offence exploded. They scored three goals in less than three minutes and took a 4-3 lead, a lead they hung onto tightly until the bitter end. To say it was a "thrilling comeback," sort of understates the obvious.

"When we were down 3-1 with four minutes to play, the coaching staff was saying 'Oh, oh, we might have a Game 5 and that would be trouble,' but we got a power-play with four minutes left," said 'Tips head coach Ryan Hrankowski.

"I called a timeout and we drew up a faceoff play that we run all the time. It was something the group knows, and it happened to work out perfectly. We scored right away, within like two seconds of the power play starting. Then right off the next faceoff, we went down and scored and tied it up.

"It got a little chaotic at that point, but with two minutes left, my daughter Raya picked up the puck in our end in full flight and the coaches looked at each other and said, 'It's over.' She walked in and scored and that was maybe the best feeling ever."

With that goal, the Silvertips defeated the Northern Stars 4-3 in Game 4 of the MWJHL championship series to claim their second league and provincial championship in the past three years.

Kelsey Forrest led the way for the 'Tips with two goals and an assist, Hrankowski, who had the winner, added a goal and an assist as did Taylor Audette. Brooke Wadge had two assists while Ashlyn Riley, Ella Manness and Kendall Manness had an assist each. Anika Moroz was the winning goaltender, stopping 21 shots to seal the deal.

Raven Carriere led the Stars with a goal and two assists. Jasper Devloo had a goal and an assist, Issy Taylor had two assists while Lian Flett had a goal, and Cally Phillips added an assist. Abigail Warkentin took the loss in net but made an incredible 36 saves.

Down the stretch, however, it was Audette who scored the big power play goal that got everything started. Then Forrest tied it and Hrankowski scored the winner with almost two minutes to play.

"It was super exciting," said Hrankowski, a science student at the University of Winnipeg. "I scored the game winning goal to make it 4-3 and then at the end, celebrating with my teammates was so exciting. The adrenalin was rushing through my body. The last two minutes, working hard to tie them up at the end, it just didn't feel real. It was my first time winning a championship and it was super exciting.

"I have a lot of great teammates, and I've made a lot of great friends with this team. We're all really close. We go out a lot together. We only have three graduating players, and we have two great goalies coming back, as well. We have a chance to win more championships."

For Raya's dad, the longtime head coach of the 'Tips, this year's victory was a big step forward after last year's disappointing finish.

"Last year we had some injury problems and under-achieved so this was pretty awesome," he said. "I have to say I was pretty worried about going to a Game 5 this year, because we were up 2-0 in the series and then in Game 3, it didn't quite go our way and in Game 4, we were playing well, but they got the lead and I was pretty worried. I was worried that maybe we were out of gas because in that semifinal series, we were down 0-2 and we came back with three straight wins, and it was a pretty crazy five-game series against the Blaze. So, yeah, I was worried that we might not have anything left in the tank for a Game 5."

Hrankowski pointed out that the 'Tips are an experienced team and that experience in tough, championship situations played a major role in the comeback in Game 4.

"We had 12 players returning from our championship team two years ago," he said. "But our top players were the players who had led us

COACH RYAN HRANKOWSKI WITH HIS LEADERSHIP GROUP AND THE CHAMPIONSHIP BANNER

all season, Taylor Audette and my daughter Raya. And there was Ashlyn Riley, who played a pretty big role in the championship two years ago, then last year she went back to Alberta and this year, she came back. She was that missing piece, a utility forward who can fit on any line. Those three were a line for pretty much half the season and they were dynamite together. Raya and Taylor, especially, had a crazy chemistry. Raya is a playmaker, and Taylor is a sniper, and you put the two of them together and it's like magic most nights.

"Then we had a couple of vets, Kelsey Forrest, who was a workhorse for the entire playoffs and Brooke Wadge, who really stepped up in the playoffs and got back some of that magic she had in her rookie season."

And, of course, great goaltending never hurts.

"Oh, our goaltending was phenomenal," said Coach Hrankowski. "In all the years I've coached, I've never had the one-two punch we had this year. Anika Moroz, who played college hockey last year at Minnesota-Duluth, came back this year and she was outstanding and Katrina Johnston, who was our third-string goalie on the championship team a couple of years ago, is now a big-time contributor for us. They both stood on their heads for us. It was like having a 1A and 1B in net. I couldn't possibly be happier with those two."

Johnston, who starred at J.H. Bruns Collegiate, reached a D-1 high school final, but never won a championship until she played with the Silvertips in 2022-23. Now, she has two titles under her belt and a chance to win many more.

"The celebration was really fun,": Johnston said. "I can see in the videos, everyone was just so happy. We finally did it. Our semifinal was quite a battle so winning it all was really important to us once we got to the final. It was a really good celebration. Hopefully, we'll win another one before I graduate out of the league."

Speaking of graduating, it's unlikely Coach Hrankowski will be leaving his volunteer post behind the bench anytime soon. He is definitely committed to returning to the Silvertips next year.

"Oh, for sure I'll be back," he said. "I love this league. It's competitive. It's exactly what I like after coming from the male side. I can pick my team and put it together the way I want. I love it, I love it all. After my time with this team, I'll retire. I won't go anywhere after this.

"And I'm really excited about next season. We have everybody coming back next year except our three overage graduating players. We should be even better next season."

2024-25 MWJHL CHAMPION

1	Katrina Johnson	G
2	Ella Manness	F
3	Ravis Constant-Kuba	D
4	Celeste Sabot	D
5	Sydney Byle (C)	D
6	Mackailla Bruce-Tapley	F
7	Cate Bracken	F
8	Corey Diamond-Burchuk	F
9	Taylor Audette	F
10	Gabby Keyser	F
11	Ashlyn Riley	F
13	Kelsey Forrest	F
14	Raya Hrankowski	F
15	Sophia Reimer	D
16	Brooke Wadge	F
17	Sara Johnstone	F
18	Cassidy Turski	D
19	Sydney Ross	F
22	Hailey Ross	F
23	Kendall Manness	D
31	Anika Moroz	G
35	Krista Fortin	G

GM AND HEAD COACH
Ryan Hrankowski

ASSISTANT COACHES
Cara Ingimundson
Christine Oakley
Emma Fernie
Amelia Martin

BY JIM BENDER
Photos by Todd Pederson

THE CUP GOES NORTH

CAPTAIN MIGUEL BOUVIER WITH THE TURNBULL CUP

Quincy Supprien really did live out his fantasy in the most dramatic game of his life.

Supprien scored at 14:03 of the third overtime period of Game 7 to give the Northern Manitoba Blizzard a 2-1 victory over the Kings in Dauphin in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League's McMunn and Yates Turnbull Cup championship final.

"It feels amazing, obviously," Supprien said from The Pas. "It's what you dream about when you are a kid – playing Game 7 and scoring the game-winner in overtime -- it is like a dream coming true.

"I just put the puck into the net and I just started screaming, and I just went to celebrate with my teammates."

He wasn't the only one screaming.

"It was unbelievable," said Blizzard captain Miguel Bouvier. "It happened so quick right off the faceoff. Just seeing the goal light go on was an unreal feeling. I won the faceoff to (Supprien) and he won his battle and he just threw it on net and it went in."

Northern Manitoba goalie Taye Timmerman, who made

BLIZZARD
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THE 2024-25 MJHL CHAMPIONS

55 saves, rushed down the ice to join the celebration.

"It was a crazy," he said. "Unbelievable moment, for sure."

It took a moment for Blizzard head coach/GM Eric Labrosse to realize the game was over.

"At first, I thought the puck had hit the outside of the net, so for the first second or two -- the whole bench staff -- we weren't sure if it went into the net or the outside," he said. "Then, when we saw the players celebrate on the ice, we were ecstatic. We just jumped into each other's arms and celebrated together. You kind of have a moment of relief when that happens because of the work that was put in and all the stress. The moment that was so intense kind of all falls into place. It felt like it was mission accomplished when the goal went in and we were celebrating together."

Alexandre Andre also scored for the Blizzard while Declan Hoad replied for Dauphin.

"I would rather have finished the game earlier," Labrosse said. "But, at the end of the day, it's a bit of a dramatic win and we're on the good end of it. It's a story for myself and all of the players to remember – having a triple overtime and a Game 7 championship win. So, it was an awesome moment to be a part of."

Both Timmerman and Kings netminder Cole Sheffield were so awesome in the entire series that they were named co-MVPs of the playoffs.

"It was probably one of my best games," said Timmerman, who posted a 12-3-1 playoff record with a league-leading 1.68 GAA and .937 save percentage and one shutout. "Cole, on the other side, played amazing as well the whole series, so it was nice to share the MVP with him."

Sheffield boasted an 11-6-1 record with a 2.06 GAA and .934 save percentage and one shutout.

"Cole Sheffield played awesome for them," Labrosse said. "He was a wall, just like Taye Timmerman was for us. It was a goalie battle (in the final), for sure. Like it was for most of the series. It was tough to get it by Cole because he made a lot of saves in key moments and Taye, on our end, did the exact same. We traded good scoring chances on both sides. I mean, I think we both had just as many scoring chances that both teams could have ended it. Luckily for us, it turned into our favour ... I

MJHL COMMISSIONER KEVIN SAURETTE WITH THE CO-MVPS OF THE PLAYOFFS, THE BLIZZARD'S TAYE TIMMERMAN AND THE KINGS' COLE SHEFFIELD

take my hat off to that kid. He's a great performer, he's an awesome competitor.

"What I like about our goaltender, Taye Timmerman, is that he's doing that as a 17-year-old. People don't realize how young he is. It's his first year of junior hockey, so, for him to be able to stay composed, stay focused throughout those critical moments, says a lot about how he's developed this year and who he is as a goaltender."

Supprien, meanwhile, has been coming through for the Blizzard throughout the playoffs.

"Quincy is probably our leader on offence as a two-way forward," said Labrosse, who recruited Supprien out of Quebec. "There are other players who are part of that leadership group when it comes to offence, but probably the most clutch player throughout the series was Quincy because he scored a lot of timely goals that were game-winners or tying goals that we needed. He came through again, at the perfect time, by scoring that goal."

Supprien, 19, scored a team-leading seven goals in the playoffs.

"Timmerman played amazing all of the series – finishing off it against Dauphin," he said. "And it was great to have him."

Northern Manitoba's Marlen Edwards scored five goals and 10 assists in 15 games to tie Tyler Dahms (three goals and 12 helpers) for the team's points lead. Supprien had 13 points. Other key players included defencemen Brett Ward and Esteban Cinq-Mars, Labrosse said. The Blizzard had not won the championship since 2003.

"I think that's awesome," said Bouvier, who will age out next year. "It's such a special thing to be a part of the history and to bring back the success the Blizzard had in their early years. Just to be captain of that winning team is just a special feeling."

Labrosse, who was hired out of Quebec last year along with assistant coach Paul-Antoine Deslauriers, was proud of the accomplishment.

"I think we've created a good program where we've turned it around," he said, adding that the Blizzard are the youngest team in the MJ. "It's a program that hadn't won in a while. We brought it from being a program that wasn't attracting the best talent, maybe, to being a very competitive organization."

There was no rest for the weary Blizzard players, who are representing Manitoba at the Centennial Cup in Calgary, May 8-18.

"I think it's a great opportunity for us to show the leagues in Canada that we're a great team to compete against," Supprien said, "and can show what we can do."

2024-25 MJHL CHAMPION

2	Lucas Boulanger	D
3	Cheechoo Lathlin	D
4	Esteban Cinq-Mars	D
5	Cutter Knight	D
6	Benson Hirst	D
7	Tyler Bernier	RW
8	Hugo Larkin	D
9	Miguel Bouvier (C)	C
10	Kellon Kellerman	D
11	Jack Linton	C
12	Isaac Tomchak	C
14	Aaron Krestanowich	D
15	Tyler Dahms	RW
16	Louis-Jacob Beauregard	LW
17	Quincy Supprien	LW
19	Louglan McMullen	LW
20	Alexandre Andre	C
21	Keenan McNeill	RW
24	Max Collyer	LW
25	Jayden Ward	RW
27	Marlen Edwards	LW
28	Cael Primanti	C
30	Alex Reedy	G
33	Taye Timmerman	G
44	Brett Ward	D

HEAD COACH AND GM
Eric Labrosse

ASSISTANT COACH
Paul-Antoine Deslauriers

GOALTENDING COACH
Jomar Cruz

ATHLETIC TRAINER
Jacob Hill

TEAM CHIROPRACTOR
Brandt Weldon

OWNERS
Rob & Bonnie White

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Scott Stroh and Darryl Gershman

SELECTS WIN ON GOAL OF THE YEAR

THE EASTMAN SELECTS WON THE 2024-25 MANITOBA FEMALE HOCKEY LEAGUE U18 AAA CHAMPIONSHIP ON A GOAL BY SOPHIA HEIDINGER IN THE SECOND OVERTIME OF THE FIFTH AND DECIDING GAME OF THE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES. IT WAS A REMARKABLE SERIES THAT CAPPED A REMARKABLE SEASON FOR AAA WOMEN'S HOCKEY IN MANITOBA.

It's a goal that Sophia Heidinger will remember for the rest of her life.

It came at the 51 second mark of the second overtime of Game 5 in the best-of-five Manitoba Female Hockey League U18 AAA championship series. It gave the Eastman Selects a 2-1 win over the Winnipeg Avros. And it was a goal that capped a remarkable season, not only for Heidinger's Selects, but also for the entire MFHL U18 AAA loop.

"In Games 3 and 4, we couldn't get pucks past (Avros goalie) Ana Almeida so I talked with Eastman's goalie coach, Roger (Storoschuk), to get some tips," Heidinger recalled. "Then I talked to him again just before the second overtime and he reminded me to try to pull Ana out of the net.

"So, on the play, that's exactly what happened," said Heidinger. "The puck got passed to Cheyenne (Scott Cooke) who shot and it came to me behind the net, so with Ana out to block Cheyenne's shot, I just made a quick little wrap-around from behind the net. She (Almeida) was pretty far outside her net so I saw the opportunity and took it.

"I was pleased and very surprised. It was such a good series, every game was close."

It was Heidinger's third championship victory after winning two with the AA Stars in Southeast Winnipeg. The former J.H. Bruns star, who was cut in city tryouts and joined Eastman three seasons ago has been on quite a ride. She made Team Manitoba last fall and played in the National Championships and now she's the winning goal-scorer on a provincial championship team.

The player head coach Laird Laluk calls, "Dinger" has also committed to playing for the University of Manitoba Bisons this fall.

"Dinger's goal caught me off guard," said Selects head coach Laird Laluk. "It surprised us all. We thought maybe the period would play out a little bit, the teams would feel themselves out, but, a strong play to keep the puck in the Avros' zone, a net drive and then Dinger hard on a puck

SOPHIA HEIDINGER CELEBRATES THE WINNING GOAL WITH TEAMMATE REESE BEAVIS

CAPTAIN ABBY DIXON WITH THE CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY

THE 2024-25 MFHL U18 AAA CHAMPION EASTMAN SELECTS

and wrapping it in, well, the entire moment was kind of surreal. The bear hugs on the bench and watching the kids celebrate was incredible.

"And I've said for a couple of years now that Sophia is someone who plays the game the right way, she plays the game hard, and could be given a game star every game. She always brings her entire energy and focus to this team. She's a third-year that's done nothing but win with us. She's an assistant captain and a leader. We had three balanced lines rolling, all working hard, but it's great when someone like Dinger can have a special moment. She definitely deserves it."

It didn't feel quite the same from the opposing bench.

"We were feeling pretty good about ourselves," said Avros coach Ashley van Aggelen, who just completed her 14th year at the helm of a team that she's coached from the day of its inception. "We had the momentum after the first overtime and the team was in good spirits and fired up and ready to finish it off. Then 51 seconds into the second overtime, it was over.

"After clawing our way back into the series, it wasn't going to be easy on anybody. When the puck went in, I had to take a deep breath and say to myself, 'Keep it together.' But when you turn and see those girls skating towards you and they're just hysterically crying, when you see your goalie lying face-down in the crease and she'd done everything she possibly could to get us there, it was heart-wrenching. It's still tough."

It was especially tough for the Avros because the series was so incredibly close.

The Selects won Game 1, 2-1, then shutout the Avros 3-0 in Game 2. But the Avros didn't quit. They won Game 3 and Game 4, by identical 2-0 scores. That set up Game 5 in Niverville, the home of the Selects. It was a thriller from the opening faceoff.

"I'm extremely proud of them," Laluk said. "The last time Eastman won was 2017 when Todd Mason was working with Bill Bram as the coaches. They were the fifth seed coming out of the regular season, but riding on the back of Raygan Kirk (now with PWHL's Toronto Sceptres) who just didn't give up goals. They were another unique Eastman team, but a banner team. So we were happy to run the gauntlet. I told you at the start of the year, we'll see how good we are when we play the big dogs and we got on a roll and the kids worked hard, wanted to play for one another and good things happened.

"They just play so hard for one another. They're easy to coach, they're mentally strong and they always work. They want to win for one another. As a group, they wanted to achieve this as a group. They battled through sickness and injury, they're so selfless. Some are multi-sport athletes and have been successful in other sports, while others maybe have come close but haven't won. This opportunity here provided them a chance to live in that moment and seize that moment. Groups like this are special, they don't come around often."

Laluk had nothing but praise for the Avros.

THE LEADERSHIP GROUP WITH THE CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY AND PROVINCIAL BANNER

"Listen, the Winnipeg Avros are a powerhouse. The Winnipeg Ice is a powerhouse. They are perennial powerhouses, so for us to be able to compete with them has always been our goal. This has been a three-year process with me as head coach. We took over a team that had five wins. We got it to 12, then 19 and then, this year we won 27. That's a testament to the kids and their work ethic, not so much the coaches. We've just been along for their journey. It's the work these kids put in that got them here. It's a great league. I'm just happy to compete in it. It was fun."

Besides Heidinger, his strong defence and hard-working forwards, Selects goaltender Addison Tomes also had a sensational series.

"It's very unique when the Goalie of the Year (Isabelle Labossiere) isn't handling the majority of the workload in the post-season," Laluk said. "We rode Addie Tomes in the final. We had full confidence in Boss. We knew if she had to play, she'd stand on her head like she did all season. Knowing that we had that, we just rallied behind the person in net. Our defensive corps – all six of them – are extremely strong. We've never had mobile defenders like this who could jump up into the play and help lead the rush and still control our zone.

"And then we had a commitment from our forwards. We talked all year about a net-crease presence and a relentless pursuit of the puck. We had a group of forwards who allowed our D to be strong by supporting them on the backcheck. This was a full commitment as a team. It was a complete buy-in as a group to make sure we were defensively sound. There were a lot of times when we didn't put up a lot of goals, but we didn't have to. We took care of our end. When you looked at the quality of shots that were headed toward our net, we liked our chances more than our opponents' chances."

As good as this Selects team was this season and as happy as Laluk was with the victory, he will not return as head coach next season. However, he has committed to coaching in the Selects organization.

"I made a commitment last year to take over this team from Todd (Mason) because I wanted to finish with the graduating players," said Laluk, the Vice-Prinicipal at Lorette Collegiate. "My wife has been saying, it's time come back to our own family, so I've agreed to take on the U15 AAA Selects because I have a daughter, Rooney, who is captain of the U13 team and has a chance to make the U15 team so we might have a father-daughter situation. Trevor Hildebrand has agreed to take over the U18 team, so everything is in good hands. We'll have a smooth transition."

Still, Laluk will take the next few months to cherish this victory. One he admits, he didn't really expect.

"It's still kind of a little bit shocking," he said. "That final series was as close as it could possibly be. It was full of emotion, jumping up 2-0, then being forced into a game five, winning at home and seeing the pictures online of all the smiles and tears, it's such a special moment for the players and the families, it's pretty amazing."

"And they're such a great group. I'm really, really proud of all of them."

EASTMAN SELECTS

2024-25 MFHL U18 CHAMPION

1	Isabelle Labossiere	G
3	Kaitlyn Schroeder	F
4	Abby Dixon (C)	F
5	Kali Remillard (A)	F
7	Reese Beavis	D
8	Isabella Carrière	F
9	Mya Grenier	F
10	Chloe Carrière	D
11	Joelle Normandeau	D
12	Blake Haas	D
13	Kennedy Carrière	F
14	Lexi Remillard (A)	D
15	Cheyenne Scott Cooke	F
16	Sophia Heidinger (A)	F
17	Vayda Rigaux	D
18	Delainey Rigaux	F
19	Danyel Heppner (A)	F
34	Addison Tomes	G

HEAD COACH
Laird Laluk

ASSISTANT COACH
Mark Dixon

ASSISTANT COACH
Lauren Warkentin

ASSISTANT COACH
Jason Remillard

MANAGER
Roxie Remillard

CRJHL
CAPITAL REGION JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE
EST. 2018
ARRIORS
ST. MALO
CO-OP

WARRIORS BACK-TO-BACK

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Duncan Hasker and Danny Truong

St. Malo Warriors head coach and general manager Ralph Collette isn't sure that a note from an NHL executive before the championship game made any difference in the outcome.

And yet Collette admitted that his players got a boost from it.

With the best-of-seven Capital Region Jr. B Hockey League final tied at three wins apiece, Collette received a note from Calgary Flames assistant general manager Dan Lambert. Anyone who has driven to a game in St. Malo or through town en route to the border has seen Lambert's name on the big sign at the entrance to the town.

Indeed, St. Malo is Lambert's hometown, but his message rang true with the Warriors:

"Good luck in Game 7 tomorrow night, Ralph. You worked all season to get that home ice advantage. Now it's time for it to pay dividends. Cheering for the Warriors." – Calgary Flames associate coach, Dan Lambert.

Whether it had anything to do with the fact the Warriors beat the Beausejour Comets 3-1 in the seventh and deciding game of the series is anyone's guess, but it certainly didn't hurt.

"It was really cool for the guys," said Collette after the Warriors claimed their second straight CRJHL title. "To be noticed by the NHL guys, especially a guy who is from St. Malo, is a big deal. He still cares about his home community and his mom is a season-supporter. Danny's late father was a big hockey guy in town. So, it was nice to get that note from Danny and the players definitely appreciated it."

Back on Friday, April 4, in the friendly confines of the tiny St. Malo Arena, the Warriors got second-period goals from Colton Magne and Brady Gregoire to take a 2-0 advantage over the visiting Comets, but before the period ended Jaedys Dancyt scored for Beausejour to make it 2-1.

The Comets pressed but the Warriors held on and when Teagan Fillion found the empty net at 18:18 of the third period, the celebration was about to start. The home crowd went nuts and a few minutes later a party that lasted well into Saturday afternoon, got underway.

"Oh my gosh, the crowds were crazy," said Collette on Saturday April 5, at about one in the afternoon. "For the final game, I don't think we refused anybody even though it was just jammed inside the building. It was completely crazy. Standing room was four rows deep all over. I can't explain it. You couldn't fit anybody else in that building.

"The guys are all at the bar right now," Collette added. "They're all having poutine and beers. I counted 52 cars still parked at the arena this morning. I'm glad they didn't drive home. It's small-town stuff, but it's lots of fun."

It was certainly a lot of fun. And although the Comets lost, it was a lot of fun for them as well. Crowds jam-packed both buildings for all seven games. St. Malo won two games in overtime, one in double overtime (Game 6 on the road) and the championship game with an empty netter. Game 4 in Beausejour, a game the

THE 2024-25 CHAMPION ST. MALO WARRIORS

Comets won 6-3, was the only game in the series that one team completely dominated.

"Thank goodness we didn't have to go to overtime again in Game 7," said Collette. "The Comets were pushing hard. Beausejour had a really, really good team. We had to bear down. They had an older team, and they really went for it this year with their 20- and 21-year-olds. They were a veteran club and they went for it big time."

For Beausejour head coach Troy Kennedy, the loss was hard to handle at first, but looking back a few days later, he realized he and his team had been involved in one of the most exciting series in the history of Jr. B hockey in Manitoba.

"It was a great series," said Kennedy. "It was good hockey with great fans. It was really, really good for the fans and for the league."

And it could have gone either way.

"Oh, 100 percent," Kennedy said. "They won two games in double overtime, a game in overtime and they scored an empty netter in Game 7. One bounce here or there definitely could have turned it the other way for us. It is what it is, there has to be a winner and a loser. We just needed to score a few more goals.

"We gave it everything we had. It's kind of been our thing all year. We were a team that could score a lot of goals. We were the team that won a lot of games 5-2, 6-1, things like that while they were a team that could score 10, 11 goals in a game. The one thing we struggled with in that series was putting pucks behind their goaltender. It came back to bite us in the butt."

Meanwhile, in St. Malo, Collette cherished his town's second-straight CRJHL title. Although the league is seven years old, two championships were lost to COVID. In five years of crowning a champ only two teams have raised the league championship trophy – Selkirk (3) and St. Malo (2).

However, Beausejour almost quashed the Warriors' dream this spring.

"Well, yeah, Beausejour played awesome hockey," Collette said. "The goaltending on both teams was phenomenal. For me, this series was all about goaltending. We used our third-string goaltender Logan Mazinke in the final two games, and it turned out to be the right move.

"Donovan Bodnar, the WHL kid we picked up, was supposed to play Game 6 in Beausejour, but he got pneumonia. So, we either went with Jozsé Gauthier-Urmos, our little goalie, or Mazinke. Joszé is a really good goaltender, but he's small and they were scoring by shooting high on him so we figured, 'Let's go with Mazinke.' He's bigger, doesn't mind the pressure and in Games 6 and 7, he was the star.

"In the end, Mazinke let in three goals in about seven and a half periods considering that Game 6 went to double overtime. He was just great."

Kennedy had no complaints about his netminder, Dylan Liske. Liske played all 15 Comets' playoff games and finished with a goals against average of just 1.96 and a save percentage of .936.

"I thought our goalie played very well," Kennedy said. "Of all the periods I thought we got outplayed, it was maybe three or four of them. I thought we were the better team in the rest

of them. We just had trouble getting to the net. The pucks were bouncing the wrong way. We had a couple of overtimes where we hit posts, even the inside of posts, and it wouldn't go in. It was just one of those things. One bounce here or one bounce there and it's a different outcome. That's the way it goes."

Collette, meanwhile, was thrilled with a number of his players, but none more than Brady Gregoire who scored the double-overtime winner in Game 6, plus the double overtime winner in Game 1.

Ultimately, however, it was all about goaltending.

"Gregoire was big in overtime, and I have to give a shoutout to Riley Tirschman," said Collette, who only loses four players to graduation this year. "Riley was let go by Beausejour this year and came over and played really well for us all season. It was pretty cool for Riley to win. Still, to me, goaltending was the show. Both teams had tremendous goaltending."

While Kennedy lamented his lack of scoring and Collette praised his goaltending, there was one thing both coaches agreed upon. It was the quality of play.

"I think this series said a lot of good things about Jr. B hockey," said Collette. "It was a sensational series. The coaches and managers from the Jr. A teams that were there were pretty impressed. I'm not saying our guys are going to start jumping to Jr. A, I just think everyone was impressed with the calibre of play. It was really, really good."

Kennedy concurred.

"We are very proud of our team and the league," said the Comets' coach. "I think it said a lot about the quality of play in our league. I think the series said a lot for kids wanting to move into this league. We came out of this series with a reputation that we're as good as it gets."

WARRIORS CAPTAIN ASHTON DUBOIS

2024-25 CRJHL CHAMPION

4	Colton Magne	D
6	Teagan Fillion	F
8	Elijah Constant	D
10	Damon Johnson	F
11	Jeremie Collette	F
12	Zachary Maynard	D
14	Ian Friesen	F
15	Marshall Braun	F
16	Brady Gregoire	F
17	Tyson Preteau	F
18	Ashton Dubois	F
19	Sam Freynet	F
20	Adam Little	D
21	Eli Dias	D
22	Keston Worley	F
23	Kaden Rioux	F
24	Ashton Cure	F
25	Riley Tirschman	D
26	Seb Frechette	F
27	Braeden McFarlane	D
28	Chase Holdnick	D
29	Logan Fillion	F
30	Logan Mazinke	G
31	Donovan Bodnar	G
33	Joszé Gauthier-Urmos	G

HEAD COACH AND GM
Ralph Collette

ASSOCIATE COACH AND AGM
Patrick Trudeau

ASSISTANT COACH
Thomas Maynard

TRAINER
David Collette

ONE OF THE TEAM'S TWO INUIT PLAYERS, JUSTIN EETUK WITH THE TROPHY

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Kelly Jacobson

BELIEF AND HARD WORK

THE OCN STORM, A TEAM THAT HAD TO MAKE IT THROUGH A SURVIVOR'S SERIES, ROLLED INTO THE PEGUIS MULTIPLEX AND PUT AN END TO THE JUNIORS SEVEN-YEAR REIGN AS PROVINCIAL JR. B CHAMPIONS. THE UPSTART STORM USED A COMBINATION OF FAITH AND HARD WORK TO COME FROM NOWHERE AND WIN THE KEYSTONE B JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE TITLE.

For OCN Storm head coach Ethan Constant, only a belief in themselves and the system and a commitment to hard work could ever turn a fourth-place team with a losing record into a provincial champ.

But that's exactly the combination that Constant got this spring as the 15-17-2 Storm won a survivor's series, beat the best team in the league in the semifinal; and then took out the Juniors in the final to win the first Keystone Junior Hockey League crown in franchise history.

Of course, in the seven years since its inception, only one other team had won a league title. That, of course, was the Juniors, a team that had won seven-straight provincial titles.

But back on April 6, at the Peguis Multiplex, the Storm outlasted the Juniors, 7-5, to win Game 5 and claim the best-of-seven KJHL championship series four games to one.

OCN's win put an end to one of the longest championship streaks in Manitoba hockey history. The Juniors had won a remarkable seven-straight titles but this year were much like OCN. They finished second overall in the standings and reached the final even though they finished the season with a mark of 18-14-2.

Of course, the rise of the Storm was even more significant. After all, OCN finished the regular season in fourth place with a record of 15-17-2 and no one expected them to be as brilliant as they were in the post-season.

"We were very happy, of course" said Constant. "We were in last place for the majority of the year. We only made a climb out of last place just a bit after Christmas break.

"But we just kept up with the mentality -- as we'd discussed at the beginning of the year -- that we were going to win this league. It didn't matter where we were in the standings or what we were going through, we just kept saying to ourselves, we're going to win it. We said that from Day 1. Even

THE NEW KJHL CHAMPIONS, THE OCN STORM, CELEBRATE THEIR GAME 5 - AND FINAL SERIES - WIN IN PEGUIS

at the end of the season, when we didn't finish our last two games very well against NCN, I just reminded the guys, it doesn't matter what happens in the regular season. What we've been working for is the playoffs and the championship.

"We definitely weren't happy to end up playing Cross Lake in the Survivor's Series, but it was a good chance for us to get our feet wet when it comes to playoff hockey and start building some momentum. The Cross Lake goalie really made it a challenge for us in that first series."

In the Survivor's Series, OCN took out Cross Lake 2-0 in the best-of-three knockout round.

But the prize was not one that people might aspire to claiming. It meant a semifinal series against the No. 1 NCN Flames, a team that went 25-7-2 in the regular season and dominated the league.

The Flames won the first game at home 6-2, but OCN bounced back at the C.A. Nesbitt Arena in Thompson and won Game 2, 4-1 in a shocker. The Storm then went home and won 8-3 and 7-4, to win the best of five semifinal 3-1.

"Our goalie, Logan Grenier really stepped up to the plate," said Constant. "Throughout the year we were kind of cycling through our three goalies, Eshar Sandhu, Nolan Sinclair and Logan Grenier, trying to give them a chance to grab that starter's spot in the playoffs. Grenier had been with us last year and we knew the work he'd put in.

"All the goalies worked hard to get that spot and be that guy, but Grenier just stepped up against Cross Lake and then he won the semifinal series against NCN, the league's first-place team. That series included some of the best hockey we've played all year. NCN was a good team. They were ahead of most teams in the league by 15-20 points."

In the final, the Storm got on a roll and dominated. The beat Peguis 6-1 and 6-5 in the first two games in Peguis and then, after losing Game 3 5-4 in overtime at home, they won Game 4, 8-6 and then went back to Peguis and won the series and the title with a 7-5 victory.

Drew Peters, the league MVP who won the scoring title with 40 goals and 80 points, also won the playoff scoring title with 12 goals and 26 points. Teammate Keilan Holland was next with 15 goals and 25 points.

"We got some great efforts out of our top guys, Drew Peters and Cedric Puffalt, but guys like Keilan Holland, Keestin Danielson, Laryn Chaboyer, all stepped up exactly when we needed them to," said Constant. "We told

THE STORM'S GRADUATING PLAYERS, FROM LEFT KEILAN HOLLAND, NATE STEVENS, CHASE MCLEOD AND XZAVIER KUBLUITOK

them that playoffs were a different kind of beast and guys had to step up and do things they'd never done before in terms of work ethic and the way they played.

"And our defence was amazing. We had guys go back and forth from forward to D depending on injuries. Luckily, we have some pretty offensive-minded D-men – Justin Eetuk, Ozy Atkinson, Rowan Fenner. Then we had our shut-down D, Liam Flett and Xzavier Kubluitok, really shutting things down in our own end. We rolled all six D-men in the final and they were so good. To win it all, it took everybody doing his part."

"We had a lot of games this season when we only had two lines. We had a lot of guys injured. We had guys miss games for school and work, so it was a struggle all season. But we kept the boys mentally ready and reminded them to keep the end goal in their minds."

That "mentally-ready" team finally got to celebrate, albeit in someone else's rink, just 11 games into the post-season. It was an impressive run by the Storm.

"It feels good to beat Peguis," said Constant. "The coaches were talking after the final game that it felt good to knock them off, but we weren't surprised. We always believed we were going to win this league and so we weren't surprised by the end result. A lot of teams saw our guys, saw the work we put in and the results were showing. I think we could have played 10 more games if we had to. Our guys were in great shape, were mentally ready every night. We came together at the right time.

"Make no mistake, Peguis has an unreal team. They kept up with us for the whole series. Most games were back and forth and most of our games were close to going into overtime."

"One of our players said that we kind of shook up this league a bit. We proved that no matter what happens during the regular season, if you work hard and play your role, you can have a lot of success. We want to come back and do the same thing next season."

OCN STORM
OCN STORM

2024-25 KJHL CHAMPION

1	Eshar Sandhu	G
3	Wyatt Hall	D
4	Chase McLeod	F
6	Brody Burrell	D
7	Sanchez Bercier	F/D
9	Liam Flett	D
10	Drew Peters	F
11	Cedrick Puffalt	F
12	Justin Eetuk	D
13	Maddox Dominey	F
14	Carson Clemons	D
15	Hutton Foster	F
16	Logan Marr	F
17	Jacey Melnyk	F
20	Laryn Chaboyer	D
22	Mason Ndungo	F
23	Tye Burke	F
24	Carter Clemons	D
25	Caleb Friesen	D
29	Logan Grenier	G
31	Nolan Sinclair Jr.	G
34	Rowan Fenner	D
37	Keestin Danielson	F
51	Colby Pentecost	D
61	Rylan Fourre-Cook	F
71	Keilan Holland	F
74	Xzavier Kubluitok	D
81	Ozy Atkinson	D
91	Nathan Stevens	F

HEAD COACH
Ethan Constant

TRAINER
Greg Personius

ASSISTANT COACH
Alan Burrell

GENERAL MANAGER
Nelson Cote

ASSISTANT COACH
Donald Melnyk

MANITOBA MAJOR JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE
LEAGUE PLAYOFF CHAMPIONS
RIELS
10
MNM

RIELS WIN SIXTH MMJHL CROWN

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Merlin Heppner

It's unlikely Mike Heppner, Owen LaRocque and Alex VanDeynze could have imagined how great it would be to be traded to the St. Boniface Riels.

But if there was ever a trade that worked out for three deserving hockey players, this was the one. In fact, Heppner, LaRocque and VanDeynze should thank Pembina Valley Twisters coach Braeden Beernaerts and team owner Pat Schmitke for letting them go and then thank Riels GM Tyler Moore for bringing them in.

Heppner was rock solid on defence, VanDeynze contributed five goals and 16 points up front while LaRocque was the playoff MVP as the Riels won their first Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League championship since 2015 and the sixth in franchise history.

Back on April 19, at Transcona's Ed Golding Arena, the Riels whipped the Transcona Railer Express 5-1 to win the best-of-five MMJHL championship series four-games-to-one. Heppner scored the game's opening goal, VanDeynze scored the third goal and LaRocque made 24 saves to get the win.

"I loved playing with the Twisters, but the trade was worth it," said Heppner who finished his last season in the MMJHL with a championship. "It was unbelievable, the team I was traded to. It was an unbelievable group of guys. It was great.

"I don't know that I've played on a better team. This is the most well-rounded team I've played on. We can trust all four lines and all six defencemen against anybody in the league. Our coach said that we had 29 different guys suit up for us in the playoffs and it was unbelievable how much depth we had. And we had star-power. We were a very good hockey team."

Indeed they were.

The Riels were a team that finished fourth in the league during the regular season, but steamrolled through the post-season, beating No. 5-seed, St. Vital Vics in four straight games. Then they upended the No. 1-seed, the Fort Garry/Fort Rouge Twins, once again in four straight games.

Then came the No. 3 seed, the Railer Express, a tremendous group that finished just one point ahead of the Riels in the regular season standings.

St. Boniface won Game 1 in Transcona 4-3, then went home and won Game 2, 2-0. They went back into Ed Golding Arena and won Game 3, 5-4 in overtime and then lost at home last Thursday night as Transcona scored a late goal to win 3-2.

But on Saturday night, April 19, the Riels played what Heppner called "the best period of hockey we've played all season." They built an early 2-0 lead and coasted to a 5-1 win. After that, they raised the Jack McKenzie Trophy and partied.

LaRocque, of course, was named the playoff MVP while star forwards Nathan Burzynski with 19 points and Connor Davis with 17 points were the Riels' top

RIELS TOP SCORER, NATE BURZYNSKI

THE 2024-25 MMJHL CHAMPION ST. BONIFACS RIELS

scorers in the post-season.

Riels owner and president, Jason Frykas praised the work of his GM for making a deal that just might have pushed the Riels to the championship.

"I'll give the kudos to building this team to Tyler Moore," Frykas said. "He made those trades that made us better, especially his deal with the Twisters. About 10 games into the season, we got (Mike) Heppner, (Alex) VanDeynze and the goalie (Owen) LaRocque. Heppner just played his last year, but we have VanDeynze for another couple of years and LaRocque for another couple of years. We should be good for a while yet."

Head coach Paul Kastes praised every aspect of his team. Calling it deep and responsible.

"The thing I'm most proud of during this run is that we had 29 different players suit up for us in the playoffs," Kastes said. "We went 12-1 in the post-season. It tells me we have a great culture, a great system and truly, a next-man-up type of mentality that when it all came down to it, it was a difference maker.

"Whoever was in the lineup, we pushed through. We were successful with whoever was playing on any given night. When you put the jersey on, you were expected to uphold a high standard. Everybody did that and that's what I'm most proud of."

For Kastes, 34, who replaced Zach Franko at the start of the 2024-25 season, the ending could not possibly have been better. Franko, as coach and GM had rebuilt a struggling Riels program in 2023. However, he left late last summer to take a job as an assistant coach with the Western Hockey League's Swift Current Broncos and Frykas quickly asked Kastes to take over.

"Obviously, I was coming into the program for the first time," said Kastes, who is also head coach of Canada's national U23 ball hockey team. "I didn't know what to expect, but I already had a great relationship with the other coaches. I was brought up to speed quite quickly. It's a tight group of guys. I know it sounds cliché, but I do believe that a team that's not tight in the locker room can't get to this point. You find yourself a winning team, you're going to find yourself a tight locker room. Our guys all take it very seriously."

Kastes couldn't stop praising the efforts of his players. He was also impressed by the fact his top players played well almost every night of the post-season.

"Well, the playoff MVP, Owen LaRocque, our goalie, was outstanding throughout the playoff run. When you find yourself a good goalie like that, you're going to give your team a chance.

"I think up front we had big performances, stats wise, from Nathan Burzyinski, Connor Davis, of course, getting Ty McNaughton back for the final two games was important. He was injured for most of the playoffs but getting him back – our first-line centre and a solid two-way player – was really important. Our kind-of-under-the-radar performance was provided by Cole Davis. He consistently did the right thing out there, played well in his own end and scored some big goals for us. He might get the accolades that his brother Connor or Burzynski get, but he was so important to our run.

"I'll save the best for last, our D corps all year was the strength of our team. They were outstanding from one through six. (Dylan) Bauknecht,

THE RIELS STAFF, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, JASLEEN SEKHON, KYLE BERGANTIM, TYLER MOORE, SEAN CHRISTENSEN, AND HEAD COACH PAUL KASTES

(Mike) Heppner, getting him in that trade early in the year, our rookie Reyes, was just an outstanding player. Evan Lambert played great. Our strength was our D-corps and we used that to our advantage."

For Frykas, who is responsible for everything that goes on with the Riels, the victory was confirmation that the franchise was on the right track.

"Top down we were pretty deep," said Frykas, president and owner of the Riels. "Having a winner makes all the work you do, everything you put into it make sense.

"We actually finished fourth and the standings were tight. It started with Zach Franko (coach and GM) going to Swift Current to be an assistant coach there (he is now the head coach of the MJHL's Winnipeg Monarchs), then we got Paul (Kastes) hired on and we had two assistant coaches returning I gave Tyler (Moore) more of a role and named him general manager. The guys ran with it. They are easy guys to play for, well-liked by everybody, and so, full credit to those guys, they did a great job."

For Heppner, who will finish his junior career with a championship, the 2024-25 season was unforgettable.

"We definitely had a good vibe heading into the playoffs," he said. "We swept the first two rounds and had all the confidence in the world and kept it rolling in the final. And we had a fantastic party afterward. We had a get-together in the room to celebrate and then we went to a teammate's house and continued on. It's great to celebrate with your friends."

While winning was the cherry on top, the crowds that attended the final were what truly impressed Coach Kastes. In a league that not only boasts a high level of play and parity, it also boasts a devoted following.

"The crowds were awesome, they packed both those rinks for all five games," Kastes said. "It was awesome. It says a lot about the league. There is some local pride in it. We get people from the area coming out, friends, family and extended family. We had great crowds, but Transcona had great crowds, too. All in all, it was just an awesome final."

ST. BONIFACE SINCE RIELS 1971 JR. HOCKEY CLUB

2024-25 MMJHL CHAMPION

2	Evan Lambert	D
4	Mike Heppner	D
5	Luke Ross	F
7	Miguel Bonin	D
8	Matthew Trott	F
10	Ethan Alsip	D
12	Reeve Sukut	F
14	Easton Kapelus	F
15	Zachary Domenico	D
17	Shea Woytowich	F
18	Noah Keating	D
19	Carson Dubois	F
21	Ty McNaughton	F
22	Eric Johnson	F
27	Aven Cockerill	F
30	Alex Domenico	G
31	Micheal O'Sullivan	G
33	Owen LaRocque	G
38	Shea Chornley	F
39	Nicholas Miller	D
44	Kailan Reyes	D
55	Jonah Crossland	F
66	Brody Melstad	F
77	Dylan Bauknecht	D
88	Cole Davis	F
89	Nolan Burzynski	F
94	Alex VanDeynze	F
96	Connor Davis	F

HEAD COACH
Paul Kastes

ASSISTANT COACH & GM
Tyler Moore

ASSOCIATE COACH
Sean Christensen

ATHLETIC THERAPIST
Jasleen Sekhon

EQUIPMENT MANAGER
Kyle Bergantim

PRESIDENT
Jason Frykas

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Merin Heppner and courtesy Darby Olson

TRUE TO THE GAME

For head coach Braeden Beernaerts, there isn't a member of the 2024-25 Pembina Valley Twisters more worthy of being called, "Player of the Year," than Darby Olson.

In fact, the 19-year-old Olson is the exact type of player Beernaerts wants in his lineup as he looks to rebuild next fall.

In 2023-24, the Twisters went to the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League final. In 2024-25, the team wearing that same Twisters uniform went 3-40-2. However, nobody believes in next year more than the Twisters head coach and he knows that leaders like Olson are the players who will get PV back to the playoffs.

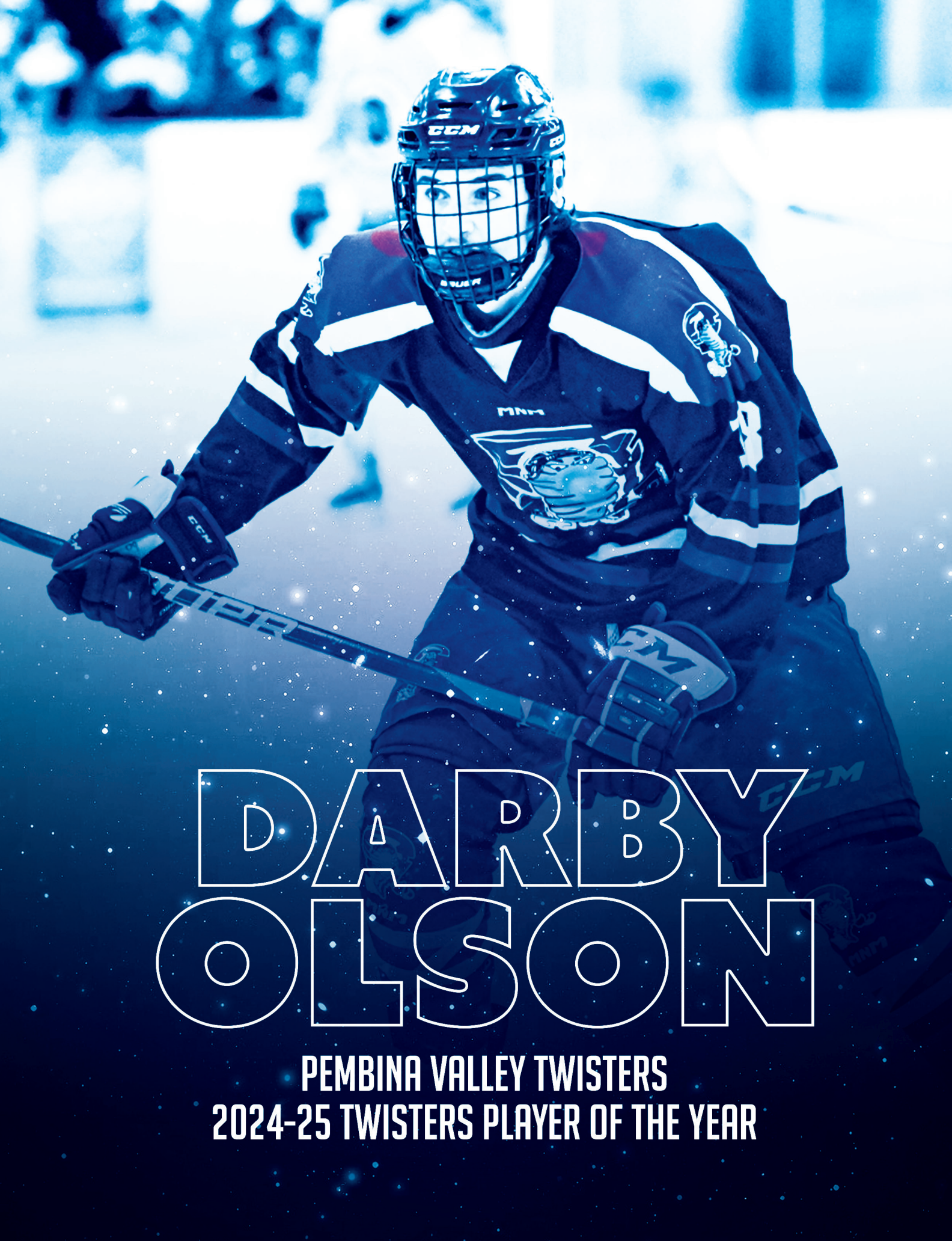
"It was one of those seasons you can't wait till it's over, although it's always fun going to the rink. We're all looking forward to next year. I think we'll be better next year. We knew this year was going to be tough. We dealt with it and now we have a bunch of young guys hungry for the future. We'll be better."

"Darby came to us this year after playing a year in the States. He came back this year. He's the driver of the bus with a lot of the groups on our team. He comes in motivated, positive and comes in to work hard every game. He's a leader on the team and was always working hard no matter what the score was this year."

Olson, who was born in Pilot Mound, grew up in Morden and now makes Clearwater his home, might be the most honest hockey player who ever laced on skates.

A 19-year-old Level 1 Apprentice Electrician, Olson is also an outstanding baseball player and obviously, during his many years as a team player, he's learned to be modest and self-effacing. In fact, if you ask him what he brings to the rink every day, he's not afraid to be candid about it.

"I'm pretty quick. I'm the



DARBY OLSON

PEMBINA VALLEY TWISTERS
2024-25 TWISTERS PLAYER OF THE YEAR

guy doing big loops and not stopping and starting," he said. "I do take the odd sh***y tripping and hooking penalty. I'm pretty good at beakin' between the whistles. I'll do a bit of that."

A typical rural Manitoban who grew up on hockey in the winter and ball in the summer, Olson has had quite a journey getting to the Twisters.

"I was born in Pilot Mound, so I started playing hockey when I was three or four with the Clearwater Sabres," he explained. "Then our family moved to Morden, so I was with the Morden Hawks from pre-novice until bantam. In bantam, I played with the Pembina Central Flyers for a year.

"In high school, there was COVID my first year, so there was no hockey, but then my next two years, I played on my high school hockey team at Morden Collegiate and in my Grade 12 year, we won the championship.

"Then I went to school at Lake Region State College in Devils Lake and played both baseball and hockey for the school, that was fun. I did my program for Wind Turbine Technology, but it didn't really interest me, so I came home to do my electrician's apprentice and play for the Twisters."

This past year with the Twisters, his first in the MMJHL, he had four goals and 12 points in 45 games. However, he meant a lot more to his team than just numbers.

"He's extremely good in the room," his coach said. "He's one of those vocal leaders that a lot of guys want to be around. He leads by example on the ice just with how hard he works. From start to finish, we had a good core group, and he made himself a part of that."

This summer, he'll pitch and play shortstop and second base for the Clearwater Baseball Club. Next fall, he'll be back at Morris Arena with the Twisters.

"The plan is to play for the Twisters next year," he said. "It's a long enough drive from Clearwater to Morris (about an hour and 20 minutes), but it's even longer into the city. I won't be driving to Winnipeg. And I stop in Morden and pick up one of my buddies and we decide there who will drive into Morris. We alternate.

"And Braeden is great to play for. I don't know if we can blame the season on him. He did his best with what he had. We should be better next year. It's hard to be worse."

As for his hockey future, that's simple. He'll play for the Twisters, work on his electrician's skills and maybe play some senior hockey. He's already played a few games for the Southeast Manitoba Sr. A Hockey League's Morden Bombers this season.

As for Coach Beernaerts, he just can't wait to see how Olson improves in his second season in the league.

"We look forward to seeing what he can do in the future with this team," he said. "During the year, he always looked forward to coming to the rink no matter what the outcome was. He brings out the best in everyone both on and off the ice. He includes everyone in the room. He's just a great teammate and a great guy to have in the lineup every night."

"WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING WHAT HE CAN DO IN THE FUTURE WITH THIS TEAM"

THREE-TIME MMJHL CHAMPION

PEMBINA VALLEY TWISTERS

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

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

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BY PAUL EDMONDS

Photos by Allyson Michnell, Sammy Prods and Leesa Ferreira

LEADING TO WIN

Like any teenager that plays hockey, Mateo Ferreira couldn't wait for school to end that day.

His mind was wandering about the game as the minutes in the classroom seemed to tick by like hours, although this day at Collège Jeaune Sauvé was slightly different than any other.

It was draft day in the Western Hockey League, an annual right of May for elite players across Western Canada and parts of the United States.

For Ferreira, the possibility of his name being called by one of the 22 teams involved in the 2025 WHL Prospects Draft was very real, but knowing exactly which one and where in the selection process it would be only added to the exhilaration and suspense.

"Obviously, it was a nerve-wracking day," says Ferreira, a defenceman with the U15 AAA Winnipeg Bruins Gold. "But it was filled with excitement."

Once the May 7 draft started that evening with an online television live stream, it didn't take long for Ferreira to hear his name called, as the Kamloops Blazers snagged him in the first round (11th overall).

With his mother (Leesa) recording the moment on her phone, celebration erupted in the house immediately afterward.

For the family, including father (Marco) and a younger brother, it was a major first step for Ferreira in living out a dream of playing in the WHL.

Leading up to the draft, the 14-year-old was in a few conversations with the Blazers dating back to the previous season, but until his name was officially announced he wasn't sure

MATEO
FERREIRA

how things would unfold.

"I had a gut feeling it was going to be Kamloops," he says. "But honestly, I didn't know until my name was called."

In addition to Ferreira, the WHL Prospects Draft was a robust couple of days for young players in the province.

A total of 39 Manitobans were selected, including 22 from the U15 Winnipeg AAA program's three teams: Bruins, Thrashers and Wild.

The top Manitoban was Reid Nicol of Brandon, who went in the first round (5th overall) to the Everett Silvertips after spending an age-advanced season with the U18 AAA Brandon Wheat Kings this past year.

Overall, Ferreira was one of four Manitobans taken in the draft's first round.

"It takes a special player to get drafted in the first round," says U15 Bruins Gold head coach Chris McColm. "I'm so proud of Mateo. I've never coached a defenceman like him before. His skill and Hockey IQ together were unmatched by any other defenceman in our league. It's well deserved."

Despite being considered "undersized" at his position, Ferreira led his team in scoring by defencemen with 21 goals and 70 points in 32 games this season. He was also the second-highest scoring rearguard in the league, finishing one point behind the leader.

Moreover, those totals were an 11-goal and 30-point improvement from his rookie season at the U15 AAA level the year prior. He admits his smaller stature forced him into thinking the game quicker, using his skating and edge work to be more productive - all at a faster pace. It was a combined growth in his game that certainly raised his stock with WHL scouts.

"My game just went to the next level this year," he says.

As an offensive defenceman, Ferreira also benefited from a four-inch growth spurt this past winter that now has him standing at five-foot-eight and 150 pounds, although it's still his skating, hands and vision that separates him from the rest of the pack.

"He scored goals this year because he knew where to place pucks," says McColm, his coach the last two seasons. "His growth from last year to this year was phenomenal. And he was our smartest player on the ice."

McColm remembers one specific play this past season that exemplified Ferreira's impact to his team and on the game overall.

"MY GAME JUST WENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL THIS YEAR"

MATEO WITH TEAMMATE TREVOR TOYNE, WHO WAS ALSO SELECTED IN THE WHL DRAFT, 49TH OVERALL TO PORTLAND

It was during an overtime playoff game in March when the Eastman Selects went to dump the puck into the Bruins zone to facilitate a "long change," Ferreira intercepted the puck, quickly spotted one of his forwards, Owen Murray (2nd Round, 31st overall – Everett), who raced in and scored the game and series winner.

"That was Mateo in one play," says McColm. "I'll never get that out of my mind on how heads-up that play was."

The victory advanced the U15 Bruins Gold to the league final where they went on to capture the Division I Provincial Championship with a three-game sweep of rival Bruins Black.

For his extended part, Ferreira added another three goals and 13 points in 11 playoff games to help guide his team to an incredible 32-0 regular season record and an 11-1 mark in the post-season.

"I stepped up my game in playoffs," says the Grade 9 French Immersion student, who is also an avid lacrosse player and wore a letter as an alternate captain on the Bruins Gold this season.

"I always wanted to get him out on the ice," says McColm. "When the puck was on his stick you knew there was going to be a smart play. He also worked so well with the rest of the players on our team."

One of those players is Ferreira's defence partner and good friend, Easton Green (8th Round, 177th overall), who was also selected by Kamloops in the 2025 WHL Prospects Draft.

Now that the next few years in his hockey journey are likely chartered, Ferreira is going to enjoy training this summer, a trip to Portugal and then attending Blazers' camp later this summer.

From there, he'll work to advance his immediate ascension in the game with an eye on cracking the U18 AAA Winnipeg Bruins next fall.

WINNIPEG AAA HOCKEY SELECTIONS (TOP 10)

2025 WHL PROSPECTS DRAFT

MATEO FERREIRA, LD - Kamloops
(1ST Round, 11th overall)
U15 Winnipeg Bruins Gold

OWEN MURRAY, LW - Everett
(2nd Round, 31st overall)
U15 Winnipeg Bruins Gold

TREVOR TOYNE, C - Portland
(3rd Round, 49th overall)
U15 Winnipeg Bruins Gold

CHACE GREGG, C - Victoria
(3RD Round, 50th overall)
U15 Winnipeg Bruins Black

JAMES STANTON, LD - Moose Jaw
(3rd Round, 60th overall)
U15 Winnipeg Bruins Gold

BRAYDEN GREGG, LD - Wenatchee
(3rd Round, 61st overall)
U15 Winnipeg Bruins Black

CREWE SCHIMNOWSKI, F - Portland
(3rd Round, 66th overall)
U15 Winnipeg Bruins Gold

DYLAN RUSSELL, C - Red Deer
(4th Round, 76th overall)
U15 Winnipeg Wild Red

GRAHAM GARD, C - Lethbridge
(4th Round, 87th overall)
U15 Winnipeg Thrashers Blue

EBENEZER SHAGANYA, RW – Seattle
(6th Round, 119th overall)
U15 Winnipeg Bruins Black

DOUBLE GOLD!

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Lucas Rotondo and Nick Lacoste

FOR **LINNEA MISNER** THERE WAS NO BETTER WAY TO END A FOUR-YEAR STINT WITH FEMALE TEAM MANITOBA AT THE NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS.

For Josh Tripp, there was no better way to start what could be a long coaching stretch with Male Team Manitoba.

On Saturday night, May 10, at the Sandman Arena in Kamloops, B.C., Manitoba's men's and women's U18 hockey teams swept the gold medals at the 2025 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships.

It was an incredible performance by both teams as Manitoba won the national title for the second time since the tournament began in 2002. Our province's teams also won double gold in 2017 in Cowichan, B.C.

Manitoba's women beat British Columbia 2-0 in the final as Braya Kapusta (Red River Metis/Winnipeg Region) of the RINK Hockey Academy in Winnipeg and Keandra Broughton (Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation) of Winnipeg Thrashers Blue scored Manitoba's goals.

Manitoba's men beat Alberta 4-2 in the final as Wyatt Dyck (Red River Metis/Southwest Region) of the MJHL's Winnipeg Blues, Mikey Thomas (Chmewawin Cree Nation) of the MJHL's Waywayseecappo Wolverines, Carter Haney (Red River Metis/Winnipeg Region) of the RINK Hockey Academy's U18 Prep team and Trace Langan (Red River Metis/Southwest Region) of the MJHL's Swan Valley Stampeders scored Manitoba's goals.

"It was a great championship game," said Tripp. "They (Alberta) beat us 3-0 during the round robin. That was another great game and I don't think 3-0 told the whole story, but they were a good team, and we prepared hard to meet them again in the final.

"We saw from that round-robin game that Alberta forechecks incredibly hard. They never stop coming, just relentless on the forecheck. So, we went over that, having our D-men move the puck more quickly and making sure our forwards came back and were supporting the D. We did a great job of that. We neutralized the fact that they always seem to be coming downhill on you."

Manitoba's women have now won six golds, two silvers and five bronze medals while Manitoba's men have won five golds, three silvers and seven bronze medals at the NAHC. It's quite a remarkable accomplishment for a province Manitoba's size, and a tribute to the coaches, managers and organizers who put the teams together for the Manitoba Aboriginal Sports & Recreation Council every year.

"This year's team was the most well-rounded team I've ever had," said female head coach Dale Bear. "The work ethic and attitudes were unreal. I know since 2013, when I first became an assistant coach, the teams have just gotten better and better and this year, our girls just came focused and worked

NAHC 2025'S TOP DEFENDER, TEAM MANITOBA CAPTAIN LINNEA MISNER, IN THE MIDDLE OF HER PRE-GAME PREP.

TEAM MANITOBA WOMEN'S HEAD COACH DALE BEAR

their butts off to get to that goal. They earned every bit of that championship and then really had to work hard for it this year. This was the best talent and the closest competition I've seen from each province since I started in 2013. Our girls deserved every bit of that gold medal.

"The championship game was a nail-biter right until the end, but our young goalie, Isabelle Labrossiere stood her ground and gave us a solid, confident performance. That allowed us to play our game and let our players do what they do."

Perhaps the toughest test for the women's team came in the semifinal when they came back from a 2-0 first-period deficit to beat Saskatchewan 4-3.

"In the semifinal, we were down 2-0 after the first period," said Bear. "But a game-changing save by Bailey Grunewald, turned the game around and gave the girls a boost and they took over from there."

Linnea Misner, Team Manitoba's captain and a four-year veteran of the NAHC admitted that this tournament was "the best ever."

"In the round-robin, we lost against Ontario, and we had a tie, as well," said Misner, who was named the tournament's best defender. "We went into the playoffs with a 2-1-1 record and won the semifinal game in overtime and then won the final 2-0. That was a great shutout for Isa (Isabelle Labossiere), she had a really good game.

"This year, I would say that out of the four years I've played in this tournament, this was the tightest competition there has ever been. Any team could have won. It came down to who wanted it more and who was going to work the hardest, and that was us.

"All games were close and hard-fought. None of them were blowout games. It could have gone to any team. I mean, our semifinal game went to overtime. And we were down 2-0 in the first period and we kind of gave our heads a shake a little bit and went out and got two early ones in the second period and then came back and won in overtime. It was awesome."

The men's victory was amazing for a number of reasons, but it was especially well-earned considering four of the team's top players – Lucas Boulanger, Alexandre Andre, Benson Hirst and Loughlan McMullen – played for the MJHL champion Northern Manitoba Blizzard and had to forego the NAHC in order to play in the Centennial Cup national Jr. A Championship.

"We talked about that all week," said coach Tripp, who played for Team Manitoba in 2014 and 2015 when he was a star with the MJHL's Swan Valley Stampeders. "We lost four very good players with the Blizzard winning and they were all top players on our team, but we're thrilled they won the MJHL championship and had to go to the Centennial Cup. We were happy for them, but it was a blow for our team.

"But our alternates were really good and ready to hop on board once they found out what the deal was, and they all played great. That's how deep our team was."

Tripp admitted he still had a monster lineup despite losing four top players.

"Both of our goalies all

WITH THE SHUTOUT IN THE CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL, TEAM MANITOBA GOALTENDER ISABELLE LABOSSIERE

week were amazing and it was a tough decision on who to go with in the final," he said. "We ended up going with Urijah Moosetail (Minegoziibe Anishinabe Nation), a 2009. He made a couple of game-savers that kept us in the lead, and he was amazing back there.

"We had a ton of great players up front. Carter Haney and Chantyn Michell-Thompson were awesome. They played huge minutes every game and were great all week. They were our two go-to guys. Then we had a line of MJ guys – Trace Langan (Swan Valley), Maxx Hamelin (Virden) and Mikey Thomas (Waywayseecappo) and they were all solid. With the junior experience, they knew the game plan and did it perfectly.

"We knew we definitely felt we had the horses to win gold," said Tripp. "Even without those guys coming from the Blizzard, we thought we had a championship team. Honestly, I think it was a good thing we lost to Alberta in the round robin. It was an eye-opener. We found out quickly that it wasn't going to be a cakewalk. Alberta had an amazing team, as well. We knew we had the team to do it, we just had a couple of learning situations to get through first."

For Misner, who won a gold in Grade 9, in Membertou, N.S.; then silver in Winnipeg in Grade 10; then bronze last year in Grand Prairie as a Grade 11 player; and then gold in Kamloops this year as a Grade 12 graduate, it was the perfect way to finish high school and get prepared to play NCAA D-1 hockey next season at Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh.

"Yep, in with a gold and out with a gold," she said. "I have had a good couple of weeks, yes (first 2024-25 MASRC Female Athlete of the Year and now Top Female Defender in the NAHC). This was the best time ever. I had so much fun. It was different this year, being my fourth year on the team and being captain and getting to lead the girls. There were a couple of girls on the team who were in Grade 9 just like I was in my first year. I hope I was able to give them the same experience I had."

TEAM MANITOBA MEN'S HEAD COACH JOSH TRIPP WITH ASSISTANT COACH HAYDEN YAREMKO

For Bear, who always seems to say that 'this was my last year coaching this team,' the tune has changed.

"I would say, this was definitely the most satisfying victory of the four gold medals just because of the competition," he said. "We never had an easy game. It was hard grind from start to finish."

"I became head coach in 2017, so this is my fourth gold as head coach and winning never gets old. Every year, I know I say, 'This was my last year,' but when you win a gold against that level of competition, it's pretty hard not to come back. I will definitely be back next year."

CANADA'S MALE AND FEMALE NATIONAL CHAMPIONS, TEAM MANITOBA

HEAD COACH
JON CARLSON

BY CARTER BROOKS
Photos by Dylan Asmundson

STRAIGHT TO THE TOP

For first-year head coach Jon Carlson, 2024-25 was the epitome of a storybook season for his U15 team.

A brand-new team for the season, RINK made it to the Western Championships without an extreme level of effort. From there, skill and hard work took over, helping the boys in black, red, white and blue lift the trophy high over their heads as the final buzzer sounded to close the team's inaugural season.

When we say 'brand-new', we truly mean it. Not only was it just a new-ish crop of players making up the roster for 2024-25, it was a whole new team devised for the season out of expansion, rather than turnover. The RINK opted to add a U15 team in the fall, following successful presentations to the Canadian Sport School Hockey League (CSSHL) leading up to the season. The decision proved to be one of the best made in years.

"U15 is a very interesting age group, if I'm being honest with you," Coach Carlson told Game On. "Because, a lot of these kids, they're at different stages in their puberty and maturity. This is their first year of hitting for a lot of them, which brings on a whole new world. There are challenges too, some need to learn how to play away from the puck. They have to learn how to support the puck. So, there's a lot of things that are new for these kids coming into the year. And personally, for me, I was coming from the U17 Prep, where you're working with older kids where a lot of that fundamental foundational skill work has already been taught. So it was certainly a year of change and growth for all of us."

But did Carlson see his team hosting the trophy at the end of the year?

"No, no. Like, you're always supposed to think that way, but coming in, I didn't think we would be winning it in our first go around, that's for sure," he laughed. "But it was just a great season for our group. I'm very proud of how the boys were able to commit, and it takes a lot of energy and time this long season. 52 games is grueling with all the practices, workouts, travel, late nights, early mornings, and then you're balancing school on top of it. It's a very grueling experience, but the kids did a great job, and I couldn't be happier for them with the way it ended in Penticton in the playoffs."

Yes, Penticton, BC's South Okanagan Events Centre Complex was the site of the CSSHL's Western Championships in mid-March, to which RINK started off with two losses, but battled back with three-straight wins.

"In terms of playoffs, like it's a very bang, bang tournament-style playoffs," Carlson shared. So, you start off in the round robin, but we

went down 0-2. I thought we played good enough to win, but just got a little snake bit. We ran into some hot goaltending. We got into the quarterfinals, snuck out a 2-1 win against St. George's. That really instilled some confidence and belief in the group. And from there we kind of rolled; our power play got quicker and some of our depth scorers got going. Goaltending got hot at the right time and we were able to go 3-0 in the quarterfinals, the semis, and then cap it off in the finals with 5-2 win."

By far the youngest team within the 17-team division, the RINK's U15 Winnipeg club actually faced off against program mate, RHA Kelowna in the final.

"Oh, it was good," Carlson laughed of the battle between the two RINK clubs. "We had played RINK Kelowna earlier in the year. We had won sort of a thriller in terms of it being one of the highest scoring games I can remember. I believe the score was 9-7 or something like that. So, we saw them in the first game of the playoffs in the round robin, and they beat us. So this one was kind of a grudge match. The true winner takes all type of game. And we came out on top, to which I couldn't be more proud of the boys, of how they were able to commit and get the job done."

The playoff victory wasn't something that came together overnight, but rather the end result of a 52-game season, hours of time working out, instructional sessions, honing the craft and reviewing video.

"We put in a lot of time and a lot of effort doing this, and again, just credit to the kids on how they were able to buy in and come together at the right time," he said. "We just have a group of very competitive kids that want to win at all costs. When it came down to it – we sort of had our backs up against the wall in Penticton there – there was no doubt in this group; they all believed that we could still get it done. Then the going got tough, they were able to buy in, work together and find a way to find a way to do it."

According to the bench boss, it wasn't a solo effort in either of the three zones, but rather a collective group that was able to get the job done as a 20-man unit.

"As a whole, there were a lot of things that came together at the end," Carlson said. "Our power play got clicking. Haize Brightnose, our goaltender, he had some really good starts at the end of the year. The final three games and playoffs there where his do or die. Kelson Hawreluik was our horse up front. He drove a lot of the offense. He's a powerful player that brings a lot of speed to our lineup. He was huge draw on the stretch for us. And Jack Arseniuk on defence. He had been playing a lot of minutes all year long. He was very strong both defensively and in the offensive zone for us. A lot of our depth lines at the end of the year came together strong for us. But really it's the group that did it. It wasn't one guy individually that carried the weight. Everybody was able to buy in together and work as one to get it done."

JACK ARSENIC

KAIZE BRIGHTNOSE

KELSON HAWRELUIK

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BY CARTER BROOKS

Photos by Dylan Asmundson, Ray Peters, Rusty Barton, Todd Pederson, Tim Allen/IIHF/Images On Ice/Hockey Hall Of Fame

WATCHING AND WAITING

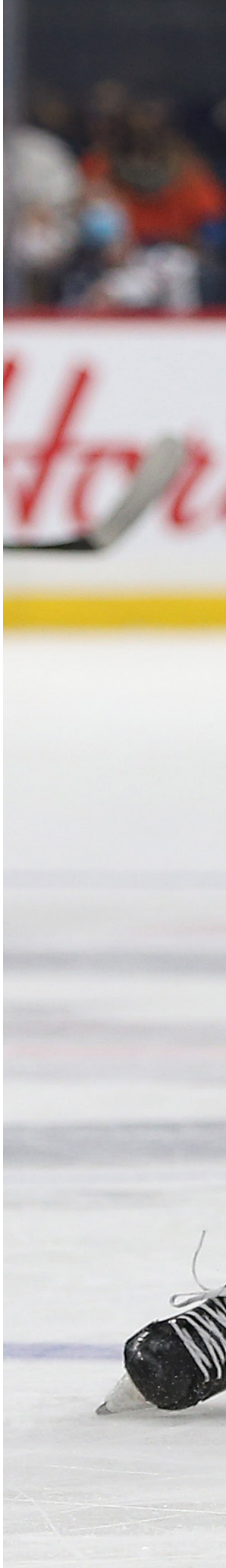
The 2025 NHL Draft is expected to be filled with surprise. With no certain No. 1 overall pick, it is anyone's guess as to who goes first, second, third and all the way through the sixth and seventh rounds. What is for certain, however, is the fact that a number of RINK-made, Manitoba star players will hear their names called from the podium this June.

Listed 37th, 38th and 39th overall on Central Scouting's final North American player rankings heading into the draft is the trio of Matthew Gard, Hayden Paupanekis and Peyton Kettles – all of whom spent their developmental years suiting up at the RINK. And just a little bit further down the list are Owen Martin and Aiden Ziprick, both of whom also have a shot at being selected by one of the 32 NHL clubs.

And this is nothing new for RINK-trained athletes. Since its inception, RINK has seen a number of its star athletes find homes professionally, within the NCAA, in Junior hockey and elsewhere. Some have even gone on to suit up in the NHL, while many others continue to hear their names called within the NHL draft.

"Well, the obvious one that comes to mind for everybody who associates with us is Seth Jarvis," said RINK Winnipeg's U15 head coach Brad Purdie. "Jarvy was part of our first team here that we had ever had. He was a player that at that age of, 14 years old, you could tell he was just a special talent and was really driven. You just knew he wasn't going to be denied. Over the years he put in the work here, and obviously, he's getting the real work now, right? You're always hoping for guys in the program to make a name for themselves and he did just that. He'll always be a part of our very first year and there are going to be a lot of guys who follow in his footprints."

Over the years, RHA Winnipeg (10 players) and RHA Kelowna (5 players) have seen 15 total athletes selected to NHL clubs through the NHL Draft. That number is set to rise come June 27-28 in Los Angeles as the 32 NHL teams come together to select 224 players over the two-day draft.



SETH JARVIS

RINK SCOUTING REPORT FROM THE COACHES:

MATTHEW GARD
RANKED 37 OVERALL

"Gard is another really tall and long defender," Brad Purdie said. "I just saw him the other day, and it seems like he just never seems to stop growing. He's a guy that plays with a lot of grit, gets under your skin. He plays with character and uses his size to his advantage. I've seen him get under guys' skin, but also has the offensive ability to make plays. But one thing I remember from when he played for me, was that he had a really good stick. He was always in the passing lanes and had that ability to knock pucks down or pick pucks off. His game was good defensively when he was with me, but I'm sure it's grown as his new coaches have put more responsibility on him, and I'm sure he's taken those steps as well."

MATTHEW GARD

HAYDEN PAUPANEKIS
RANKED 38 OVERALL

"Hayden always has the ability to be a major impact on the game with the combination of his size, speed and skill," RINK coach Rob Smith said of Paupanekis. "He is an explosive skater who moves around the ice extremely well. He's got a pro-like shot. On the flip side, having more consistency and bite in his game would make him that much more dominant and he could focus on being more committed to his play away from the puck."

HAYDEN PAUPANEKIS

PEYTON KETTLES
RANKED 39 OVERALL

"Peyton is a big a big shot defenceman that plays with sandpaper," RINK coach Brad Purdie said. "He is one of those coveted groups of players at the next level. He's got a shot and all that stuff, but I think his strength is just defending and keeping guys away from the goal. His length and reach are great. You really don't want go to the front of the net when there's a big guy there that's willing to give you a little bit of lumber, right? So, he does a good job keeping guys away from the front. He really keeps guys to the outside, which is one of the top goals as a defenceman."

PEYTON KETTLES

AIDEN ZIPRICK

OWEN MARTIN

OWEN MARTIN
RANKED 54 OVERALL

"Owen is a really powerful, explosive kind of skater with a great shot," Smith said of Martin. "He's a good two-way forward, in that he can provide offence but also be used in defensive situations. He really understands the game, defensively. He has a high compete level and a bit of edge to his game. A lot of the offence he creates come from changes in his speed and explosiveness."

AIDEN ZIPRICK
RANKED 162 OVERALL

"Aiden has strong leadership qualities and a great work ethic," former RINK coach Sandy Henry said of Ziprick. "I instantly thought he was captain material. He is a strong, smooth skater, which is a really big asset for him. He always had some offensive upside; he could move pucks on the power play and had really good blueline mobility. Zippy's got a really good first pass. We worked on his retrieval speed and deception which helped him become a top-end puck mover who could transport pucks as needed. Aiden is a character player, so his success is no surprise to me. He was one of my favourite athletes to coach."

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DYLAN SVEINSON

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

BY JOHNSTON HALL
Photos courtesy of Pilot Mound Hockey Academy

HOCKEY IS TOUGH ENOUGH. IT'S A GAME THAT DEMANDS HEART AND GRIT, BUT TO BE SUCCESSFUL, IT ALSO NEEDS GRADE A PHYSICAL CONDITIONING.

For two young players at Pilot Mound Hockey Academy, U17 prep forward Dylan Sveinson and U18 prep forward Caleb DeBruyne, there is an extra obstacle in the way of success.

Both Sveinson, who had five goals and 10 points in 41 games in his first season at Pilot Mound, and DeBruyne who had seven goals and 22 points in 41 games, have type 1 diabetes.

Just like their conditioning, it's another element that has to be constantly monitored.

"I was diagnosed in 2023 when I was in Grade 8," said Dylan, who helped the U17 prep Buffaloes win a Canadian Sport School Hockey League (CSSHL) championship this past season. "I took a week out of school because we didn't know what we were doing. The first night, I went really high, and I was rushed to the hospital thinking it was an emergency. But they calmed us all down and now it's just something I've had for about two years now.

"When we're travelling it can be hard to manage. On road trips, I always go super high, no matter what I do. I've been working with a medical team in Winnipeg to try and figure out ways to get around that. I have a lot of great friends and coaches who help me through it so it's pretty good. Being at PMHA and their support has also been really helpful."

DeBruyne has more experience with his diabetes than Sveinson. It's been a part of his life for 12 years now.

"I got it for my sixth birthday and I've just kind of figured it out through the years," said DeBruyne who helped get the U18 prep team to the CSSHL Tier II Championship final this season. "I've been doing this for a long time. It's never affected my hockey. I mean Max Domi has it and it's never affected his game. I have that mindset that isn't different or sets me apart, it's just something in my life.

"I handle it pretty well, but my doctors give me a hard time every now and then because I run a little too high, but otherwise I'm on top of it."

Sveinson, who hails from Dryden, Ont., admits that his diabetes is still a work in progress. As a result, he has an app on his phone that helps him check his blood-sugar level regularly.

"I don't have the app shared with my coaches or anything. They're all pretty confident that I can handle it on my own," he said. "It'll beep whenever I'm high or low and when I'm on the bench, I'll just do whatever I need to do.

"The odd time I'll have a problem in class, but I always have stuff in my backpack that will treat it. Or my teachers will bring whatever I need. It's under control but it's something I have to think about every day. I have to stay on top of it all the time."

CALEB DEBRUYNE

Sveinson is pleased with his time at PMH and says he'll be back to play with Coach Rick McConnell and the U17 prep team next season. It's been quite a hockey journey, so far.

"I started playing hockey when I was four," he said. "My first year of being eligible for AA, I got cut and played house league that year and then in my second year, I made AA and I played at that level for the next five years. Last season, we were trying to figure out where I was going to go and then the coaches at PMHA, Rick (McConnell) and Danny (Carels), texted me and asked if I wanted to go to Pilot Mound.

"It's been great here. We like the dorms, and we like the atmosphere. It feels like a family. Everyone is so close, and my parents felt really comfortable sending me here. My parents make a lot of the trips, whether it's Pilot Mound or Penticton or Calgary, wherever we are."

DeBruyne, meanwhile, is from Regina and despite being just 5-foot-7 and 155 pounds, he has become one of U18 prep Coach Anthony Florentino's grittiest players.

"I started in Regina when I was really young," he said. "I played all my minor hockey in Regina and I found PMHA through an advisor that I used to have. He contacted Anthony and I decided to come here.

"We were in the CSSHL Tier II final this year, but we lost. It was a good year, lots of memories and lots of wins. It was a lot of fun."

In the meantime, handling his diabetes has become second-nature.

"Usually I just take care of it all on my own, but the coaches check in on me to make sure I'm good," he said. "They keep an eye on me, but I take care of things on my own. I've never had anything happen in a game or on the bench. Sometimes my sugar might get too low, but I just drink a juice box and it levels out. It's not easy, but so far, it's been all good."

McGINTY
11

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WHAT A YEAR!

BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos courtesy Pilot Mound Hockey Academy

For Pilot Mound Hockey Academy (PMHA) Buffaloes U17 prep head coach Rick McConnell, nothing beats the feeling of winning.

And this season, winning the Canadian Sport School Hockey League's (CSSHL) U17 Prep Tier II championship, was just about as much fun as a hockey coach can have.

"It was fun," said McConnell, who has now won two CSSHL U17 championships with PMHA in the past 6 years. "It was a good way to wrap up a year. I had a lot of new guys, a lot of young guys and knew it was going to be kind of a re-building year, but I did have enough returning kids I could count on. We had our ups and downs through the season because the league is so, so strong. You have to come to play every night, but I was very pleased from Christmas on. I saw a lot of progression and the kids bought into a lot of what Danny [Carels] and I had been preaching – which was basically hard work.

"They got the systems down and started playing the way we wanted them to play. We had a big game out in Edmonton. We upset OHA Edmonton and it kind of turned the season around. The last quarter of the season, the kids played some really good hockey and then we had an outstanding playoff. I was confident we

MVP COLLIN FRIEDRICH

could do it but still, there were a lot of good teams there. Overall, I was quite pleased with the whole season."

As happy as he was with all of his players' efforts, he was especially happy with the play of his two goaltenders and forward Collin Friedrich.

THE DIMINUTIVE MVP

Friedrich was named MVP of the Tier II CSSHL Championship, and it capped a tremendous season for the 16-year-old, first-year player from Tampa, Fla.

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Friedrich went pointless in his first game of the championship tournament and then produced six goals and nine points in his final four games to finish third in playoff scoring. In the semi-finals, he had a flurry of chances in overtime, before finally burying the game winner with just two seconds left. In the final, PMHA cruised to a 7-0 victory as Friedrich had a goal and two assists. During the regular season he recorded 23 goals and 43 points in just 36 games.

"Collin Friedrich is very good," said McConnell. "We call him Freddy and he's a little guy who is a warrior. Man, if that kid was 6-foot-2, he'd be making millions someday. He's a tremendous hockey player. He has great speed, he never quits, and every night this season he was a trooper. He scored a lot of big goals for us. He's a great kid, as well."

Interestingly, recruiting players from Tampa hasn't been a rarity at PMHA. The school has developed a solid reputation on Florida's West Coast.

"Former players from Florida, guys I'd had in prior years, had gone back and spread the word at home," McConnell explained. "We played out there in a tournament a couple of years ago and he came and talked to us. I went and watched him play a couple of games and said, 'We'd love to have you,' and he'd found a place.

"It's quite a bit different for those Florida boys coming up here dealing with our winters, but if they want to be hockey players, this is absolutely hockey country. He loved it. It's a small town with no distractions and is totally different from his experience at home, but once these kids from big cities settle in, they love it here."

SUPERB GOALTENDING

Meanwhile, goaltender Matthew Palmer won the semifinal game at the CSSHL Western Championship by holding off the No. 1 seed, St. George's School of Vancouver, 4-3, in overtime. Then Barrett Hayes played the final and delivered a 30-save shutout as PMHA crushed the North Shore Warriors 7-0.

"Our goaltending was superb," said McConnell. "That's how we won it in the end. I've always said, 'A good coach is surrounded by good coaches, hard working players, and great goaltending.' Both the goalies were outstanding. I more-or-less rotated evenly all season. One guy, Palmer, went down for a few weeks with an injury, but in the playoffs both Palmer and Hayes were spectacular. They did what you need to do in order to win. I can't say enough good things about both of them."

There were a lot of reasons for PMHA to brag this year. All three male teams – U15

GOALIES MATTHEW PALMER AND BARRETT HAYES WITH THE CHAMPIONSHIP BANNER.

prep, U17 prep and U18 prep - reached the Tier II CSSHL Championship final while a number of Buffaloes players on all 4 prep teams have signed letters of commitment to step up and play at the next level.

PLAYERS MOVING ON

Forward Austin Polonoski (2007), a 6-foot-2, 175 pounder from Thunder Bay, will play for the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League's Humboldt Broncos next season.

Defenceman Brody Wytinck (2008) a 6-foot-1, 170 pounder from Bruxelles, Man., has agreed to join the Manitoba Junior Hockey League's Dauphin Kings and has also been listed with WHL's Kamloops Blazers after a solid CSSHL Championship showing.

Defender Heidi Danners (2007) from Wawanesa, Man., has signed a letter of commitment to play at Midland University in Fremont, Neb.

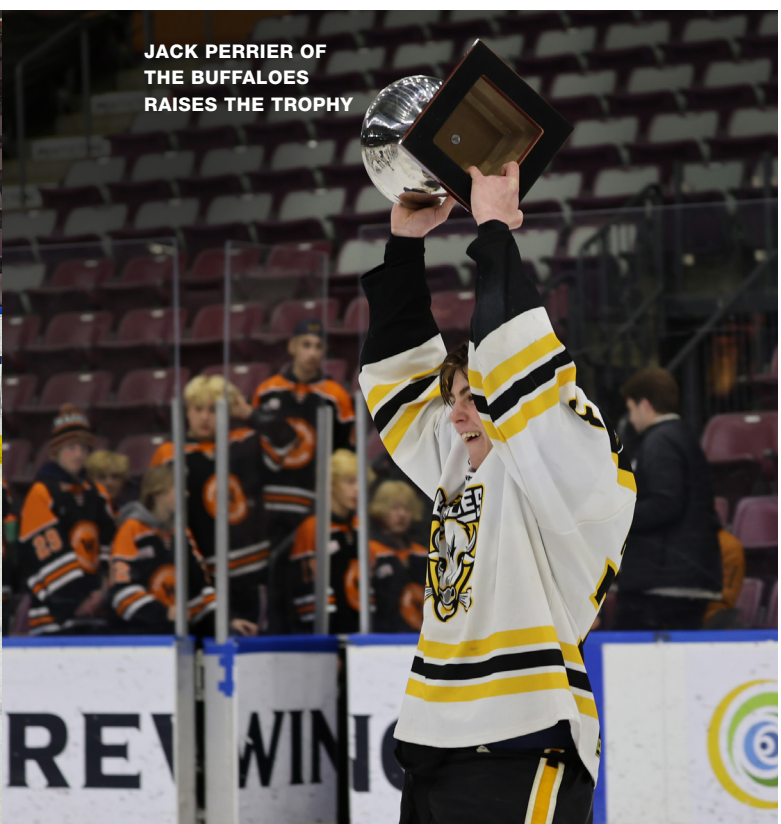
GAVIN HILDEBRAND

Forward Ashlyn Kuffler (2007) from Chilliwack, B.C., has also signed a commitment letter to Midland University.

Defender Addison Scoville (2007) from Coronation, Alta., has committed to playing at Adrian University in Adrian, Mich.

Defender Bailee Allan (2007) from Abbotsford B.C., has committed to Indiana Tech (ACHA – D1) in Fort Wayne, Ind.

And forward Caleb DeBruyne (2007) from Regina has recently signed with the New Mexico Ice Wolves of the NAHL.


JACK PERRIER OF THE BUFFALOES RAISES THE TROPHY

WHL DRAFT PROSPECTS

Four PMHA U15 prep players have a solid shot at being selected in the 2025 Western Hockey League Draft – forward Cole Landreville (2010) of St. Claude, Man.; forward Maddox Ramage (2010) of Pilot Mound; defenceman Brett Buors (2010) of Niverville, Man.; and goalie Gavin Hildebrand (2010) of Morden, Man.

In the meantime, the best news around the dorms at PMHA this past week is the confirmation of the coaching teams for the 2025-26 season, including the return of U17 prep coach Rick McConnell, who has won two CSSHL Championships in the past six seasons.

"I love what I'm doing," McConnell said. "I thrive in moving these kids on to higher levels, but even if I can't move them on, I work hard at making them better people. Pilot Mound is my hometown, where I grew up, and is the best place in Manitoba to develop hockey players in an all inclusive hockey environment with no distractions. I'm going to keep doing this at PMHA for as long as they'll have me."

PILOTMOUNDHOCKEYACADEMY.COM

BY SCOTT TAYLOR AND CHELSEA DINNIN
Photos by James Carey Lauder and Darryl Gershman

BLAZING TOWARD THE FUTURE

For Balmoral Hall Blazers Director of Hockey, Sarah Zacharias, winning isn't everything – it's just one of many things.

That's why, after the Blazers won the 2025 Canadian Sport School Hockey League's U18 Female Prep D-2 championship, the celebration was fun, but the outcome didn't change her opinion of the importance of the entire experience.

No one knows better than anyone that the young women who play at BH won't sign multi-million contracts with National Hockey League teams. These young women

COMMITTED TO THE FUTURE: FROM LEFT, GOALIE LAUREN CHERKAS, SHAYNA BANNISTER, EMMA POWER, MAKENNA WILLIMENT, MADDIE KAISER, LUCIE VELINSKA. MISSING: JULIANNA DEGROOT.

will be doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses and scientists. They will have full, exciting lives, and hockey is just one big part of it.

"Winning has never been our expectation," Coach Zach said. "Regan (Boulton) and I -- during the last eight years since we took over the program -- our first priority was never about winning games and championships. We felt the less we talked about winning, the more we ended up winning.

"When you have a mindset of growth as opposed to being fixed on winning games, it's a lot easier to find success. We spend our time caring about their development – development as players, development as people, getting better every day, showing up at the rink and putting in the work. They did that all year long and went through a lot of obstacles. It was a great opportunity for our kids to face challenges and learn about resiliency."

Based on the fact that seven Blazers graduates are moving on to play university hockey on both sides of the border, there is a clear indication that the BH Prep hockey program exists for growth, not championship trophies – although it's fun when those trophies come along.

"The reason these girls are in this program is that they want to go to the next level and that's my job – to get them to the next level, the level they're supposed to get to," Coach Zach said. "I care more that they're all ready to go in and compete at college, wherever it is they're going. Winning games is not the No. 1 priority.

"Now, the coaches want to win, and the players want to win, but what's important is that they not only improve enough to get to the next level, but they are ready to compete at the next level. I'm happy to see them get stronger every day. That's where I get my kick from. I love to see them growing. That's what excites me about coaching."

There is very little question that the following seven players have grown considerably during their time at Balmoral Hall. Blazers assistant coach Chelsea Dinnin introduces us to the Super Seven.

MAKENNA WILLIMENT

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

"Makenna started with the Blazers in her Grade 10 year, finishing in her Grade 12 year as our captain. She was one of only a few Blazers to hit the 100-point mark with her ability to find her teammates and to release her quick one timer. Makenna finished the playoffs with the most points in our division with six goals and 10 points in only four games."

MADDIE KAISER

BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY

"Maddie joined the Blazers in her Grade 11 year, finishing in her Grade 12 year as an assistant captain. She was another one of the few Blazers to hit the 100-point milestone. Maddie is a gifted goal scorer but overall, a great player. She is able to see the ice well and is determined to get the puck to the net. Maddie finished third in the CSSHL in scoring this season with 27 goals and 61 points."

LAUREN CHERKAS

ALBERTUS MAGNUS COLLEGE

"Lauren has committed to Albertus Magnus in New Haven, Conn. Lauren joined the Blazers in her Grade 10 year and finished in her Grade 12 year as an assistant captain. Lauren has been a solid contributor between the pipes the last three years! Lauren played three of the four games at the CSSHL championship tournament in Penticton, winning all three games."

SHAYNA BANNISTER

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

"Shayna joined the Blazers in her Grade 12 year and is relentless in her pursuit of the puck. In her only season, she helped the Blazers to the D-2 championship by finishing in the top 10 in scoring in the playoffs with five points in four games. She's a tough player who used her height to push around players and also get to the net."

EMMA POWER

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

"Emma joined us in her Grade 12 year and is a strong player with an even stronger shot. Her offensive prowess led to many important goals this season. She finished the playoffs with three points in four games and we're excited to see what Emma has to bring to the Pandas next season."

LUCIE VELINSKA

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

"Lucie joined us in her Grade 11 year finishing in her grade 12 year as an assistant captain. Lucie is able to play any position on the ice and is always able to adapt to the play as a defender or forward. Lucie hails from Czechia and has been a positive addition to the team. Lucie finished the playoffs with three points in four games and we're excited to follow her success at Dalhousie."

JULIANNA DEGROOT

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

"Julianna is a strong, poised defender who steps up in the play at the right time. She started with the Blazers in her Grade 11 year finishing in grade 12 as an assistant captain. Julianna sees the ice very well in the offensive and defensive zones and was an important player on our power play this year as our quarterback on the blueline."

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For Mathison, who is also the owner of Western Marble Granite & Tile, hockey transcends the boundaries of a mere pastime. He sees it as a powerful force for fostering community spirit, instilling invaluable lessons of dedication and teamwork, and providing a platform for young athletes to cultivate their skills and aspirations.

This philosophy is deeply embedded in the ethos of Western Marble Granite & Tile, driving their commitment to supporting the development of aspiring hockey players within the region.

While the company's expertise lies in transforming spaces with exquisite stone, their impact extends far beyond the countertop. Western Marble Granite & Tile actively champions youth hockey initiatives through various avenues. This often includes financial contributions that help to offset the rising costs associated with equipment, ice time, and travel for young players and their families. By alleviating some of these financial burdens, Western Marble Granite & Tile ensures that more children have the opportunity to participate in the sport, regardless of their economic background.

Furthermore, their support can extend to sponsoring local teams and leagues, providing essential resources that contribute to the overall quality of youth hockey programs. This might involve helping to fund coaching development, ensuring access to adequate facilities, or supporting tournaments and events that showcase the talent and dedication of young athletes. Western Marble Granite & Tile's involvement often goes beyond mere monetary donations, fostering a genuine connection with the local hockey community.

Through these multifaceted efforts, Western Marble Granite & Tile contributes significantly to the vibrant tapestry of the local hockey community, nurturing the next generation of athletes and fostering a culture of teamwork and dedication that extends beyond the rink. The company's commitment underscores a belief that investing in youth sports is an investment in the future, building stronger individuals and a more connected community.

Western Marble Granite & Tile's dedication to both their craft and their community paints a picture of a company that understands the importance of giving back. Their support for youth hockey is a testament to their belief in the power of sport to positively influence young lives, mirroring the same dedication to quality and excellence they bring to their work.

In Manitoba, Western Marble Granite & Tile is building more than just beautiful surfaces; they are helping to build dreams on ice.

JEREMY MATHISON, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF WESTERN MARBLE GRANITE & TILE AT THE WMGT RINK AT WINNIPEG'S HOCKEY FOR ALL CENTRE.

Photos by James Carey Lauder

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General manager Kevin Cheveldayoff and the Winnipeg Jets opted to make two moves in early-March at the trade deadline. They avoided the shiny, expensive chrome detailing, rather going with the scratched up, rough-yet-solid components. Bringing in Luke Schenn and Brandon Tanev added some depth, experience and familiarity to the fold for what management hopes to be a lengthy postseason run.

Amid a record-setting season, the front office and coaching staff decided to stand pat and stick with what was working, rather than adding that expensive, flashy part. Let's get to fact of the matter: Winnipeg was the very best team in the NHL through 82 games. Why tinker with a beauty when she's already running just fine?

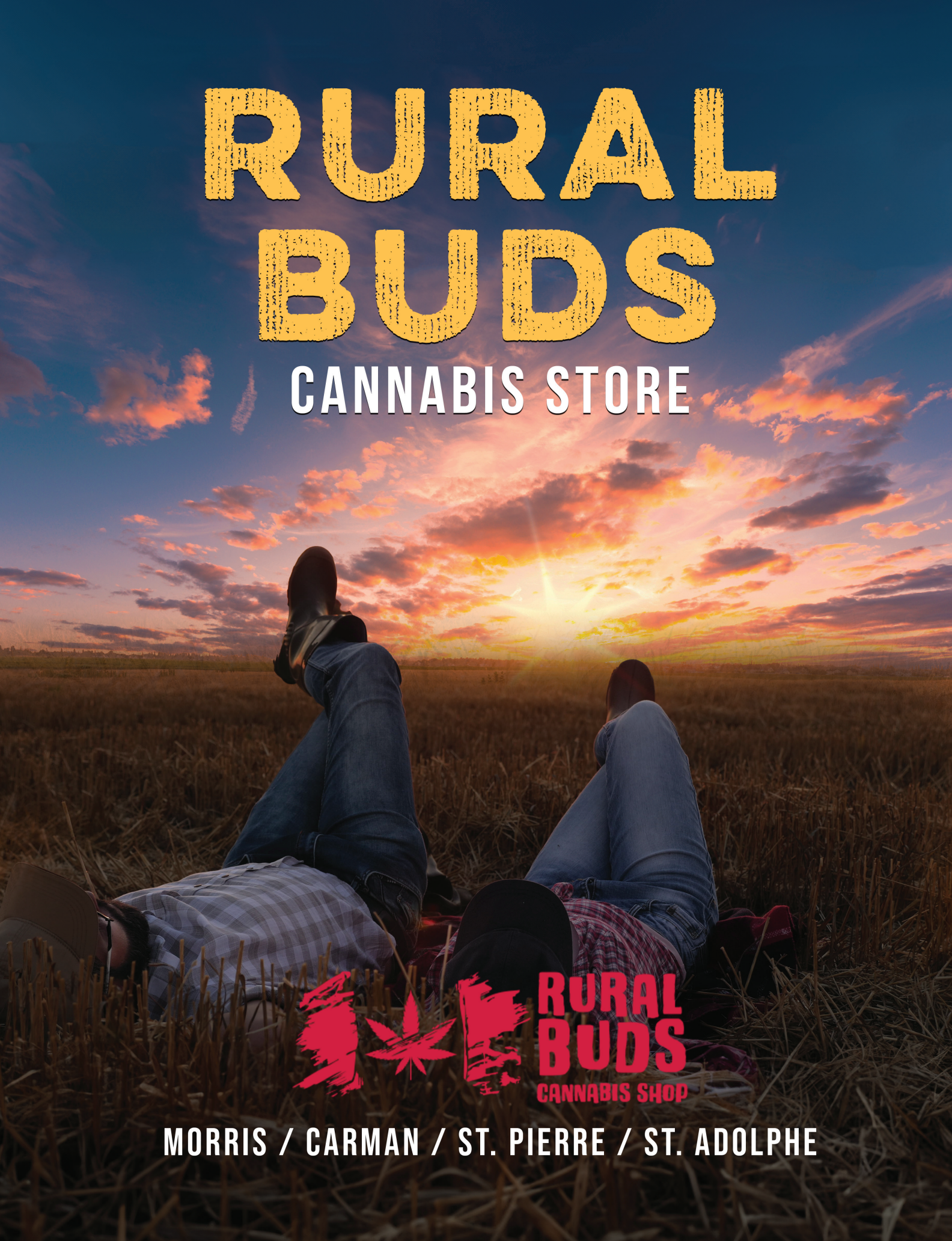
For Schenn, the move to Winnipeg came as the second leg of a trade that already saw him shipped from Nashville to Pittsburgh just over one day earlier. Bringing over 1,000 games of NHL experience to the fold, the 35-year-old did make the difficult decision to leave his family behind in Nashville.

But as the 2024-25 season wore on, Schenn took advantage of the Jets' offering on off days and optional skates to head south for family visits as the team and timing allowed. "I should be collecting Air Miles with the amount of time I've spent on an airplane lately," Schenn laughed. "I might have some nice trips coming up in the summer."

"It's been a lot of flying, it's been a lot of hours on the plane, just trying to balance everything out between obviously being here and having a wife and three kids in Nashville. That's where everyone's set up right now, kids in school. I'm grateful for Arnie and Chevy and the Jets organization. It was actually their idea to go back and check in — obviously I appreciate that. I don't know if it makes it better or worse to go back and see them for under a day or 24 hours. It's always hard leaving. Just trying to make everything work and balance everything out."

"I SHOULD BE COLLECTING AIR MILES WITH THE AMOUNT OF TIME I'VE SPENT ON AN AIRPLANE LATELY"

Photo by Scott Stroh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