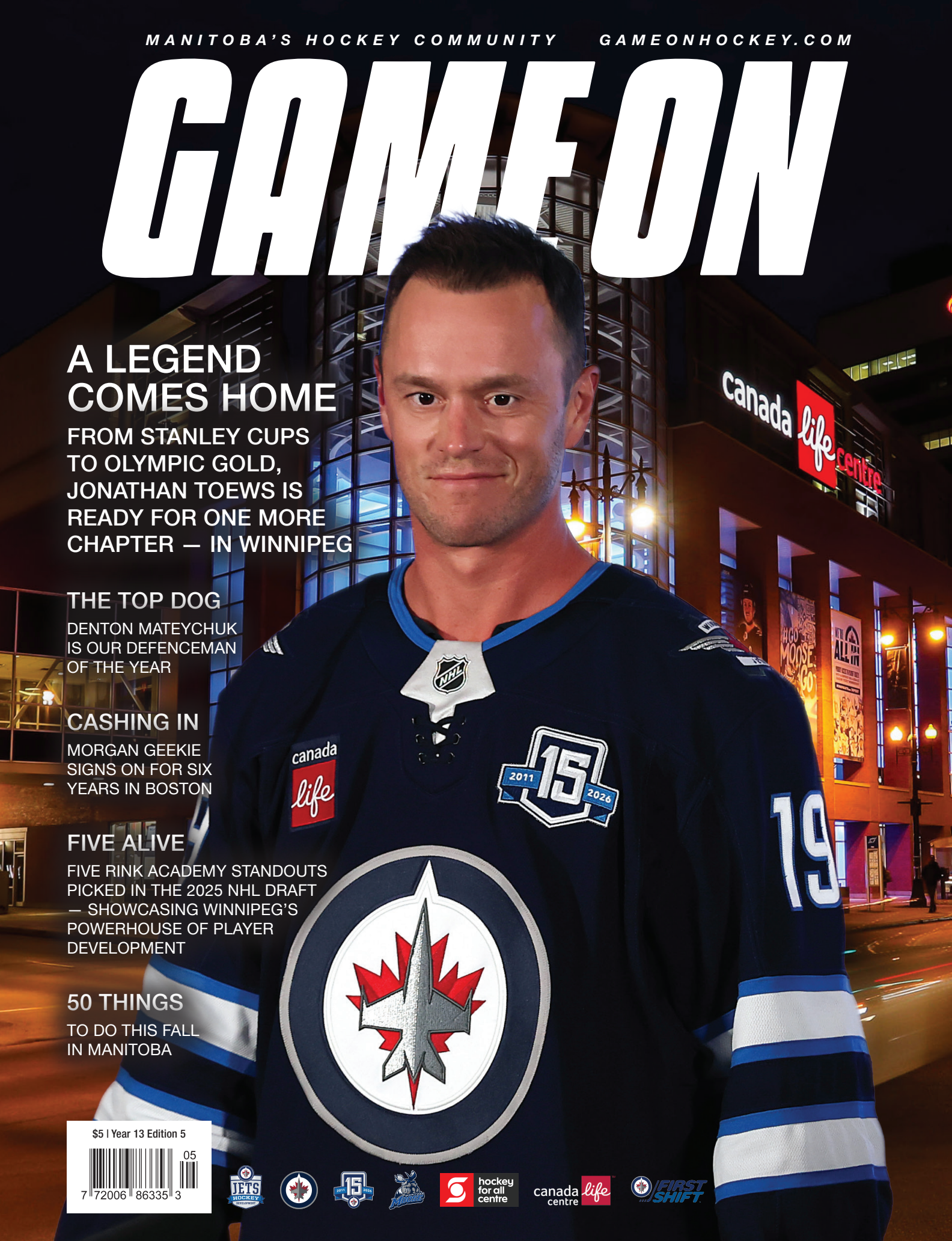
MANITOBA'S HOCKEY COMMUNITY GAMEONHOCKEY.COM

GAME ON



A LEGEND COMES HOME

FROM STANLEY CUPS TO OLYMPIC GOLD, JONATHAN TOEWS IS READY FOR ONE MORE CHAPTER — IN WINNIPEG

THE TOP DOG

DENTON MATEYCHUK IS OUR DEFENCEMAN OF THE YEAR

CASHING IN

MORGAN GEEKIE SIGNS ON FOR SIX YEARS IN BOSTON

FIVE ALIVE

FIVE RINK ACADEMY STANDOUTS PICKED IN THE 2025 NHL DRAFT — SHOWCASING WINNIPEG'S POWERHOUSE OF PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

50 THINGS

TO DO THIS FALL IN MANITOBA

$5 | Year 13 Edition 5

05

7 72006 86335 3

2025-2026 PROMO SCHEDULE

FRI, OCT 10, 7PM
HOME OPENER
Presented by Canada Life
Picture Frame Giveaway (First 3,000 Fans)

SUN, NOV 2, 2PM
FAIRYTALE DAY

SAT, NOV 22, 2PM
HOCKEY FIGHTS CANCER
In Support of Camp Quality MB

TUE, NOV 25, 10:30 AM
PROJECT 11 SCHOOL DAY GAME
Presented by Salisbury House

SAT, NOV 29, 2PM
EPIC FUN DAY

SUN, NOV 30, 2PM
TEAM POSTER GIVEAWAY
(First 3,000 Fans)

FRI, DEC 12, 7PM
SOIRÉE FRANCOPHONE

SUN, DEC 14, 2PM
TEDDY BEAR TOSS
Presented by Booster Juice
In Support of Christmas Cheer Board

SAT, DEC 20, 2PM
WINTER CARNIVAL

SUN, DEC 21, 2PM
WINTER CARNIVAL

WED, DEC 31, 4PM
NEW YEAR'S EVE
Post-Game Fireworks

FRI, JAN 2, 7PM
MINI BOBBLEHEAD GIVEAWAY
(First 3,000 Fans)

SUN, JAN 25, 2PM
FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS DAY
Presented by Scotiabank
In Support of WASAC

SAT, JAN 31, 2PM
MINOR HOCKEY WEEKEND

SUN, FEB 1, 2PM
MINOR HOCKEY WEEKEND

SAT, FEB 14, 2PM
VALENTINE'S DAY

MON, FEB 16, 2PM
SUPER HERO DAY

SAT, FEB 21, 2PM
DAY AT THE MOOSEUM

SUN, FEB 22, 2PM
AUTISM ACCEPTANCE
In Support of St.Amant Foundation

SUN, MAR 8, 2PM
MINI BOBBLEHEAD GIVEAWAY
(First 3,000 Fans)

WED, MAR 18, 10:30 AM
PROJECT 11 SCHOOL DAY GAME

SAT, APR 4, 2PM
MASCOT PALOOZA

SUN, APR 12, 2PM
FAN APPRECIATION

MOOSEHOCKEY.COM | Tickets



Green Blade in YOUR Community

Green Blade has been an annual supporter of multiple charities for many years. In the past 10 years we have donated over $250,000 to various local charities. We are annual supporters of the Make-a-Wish Foundation, Children's Rehabilitation Foundation, and STARS Air Ambulance. Green Blade regularly sponsors gala dinners, golf tournaments, and much more.

We are annual supporters of Ride for Dad and the Adult and Teen Challenge Sled for Eternity and donate all of our old trucks to Adult and Teen Challenge as well.

In addition to donating tens of thousands of dollars in services to multiple charity auctions, over the years we've donated many autographed NHL jerseys to sick children, donated box seats at Goldeyes games to children's charities, and given away a multitude of tickets to NHL and CFL events to families with sick children.

You can also catch Green Blade advertising in the outfield at Blue Cross Park and at Princess Auto Stadium.

Green Blade is also the official lawn care company of the Winnipeg Humane Society and we annually support their charity events. We also sponsor Wounded Warriors each year.

Green Blade has also won the Consumers Choice Award in Lawn Care for the past four years.

If you are looking for a lawn care or snow clearing service that is truly part of your community and gives back generously, please reach out to us at 204-837-1764 or info@greenbladewinnipeg.ca.

PROUD PARTNERS OF:

Children's Rehabilitation Foundation · Winnipeg Goldeyes · Winnipeg Blue Bombers · Ride for Dad · Make-A-Wish · Winnipeg Humane Society · Wounded Warriors Canada · STARS

CONSUMER CHOICE AWARD 2025 WINNIPEG

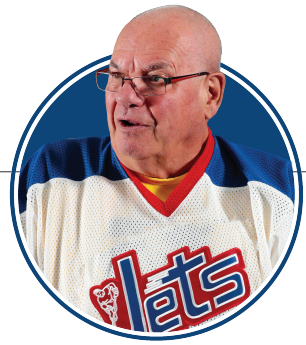
CELEBRATING 1,100 FIVE STAR REVIEWS

★★★★★ Google

GREEN BLADE LAWN CARE
The lawn health experts.

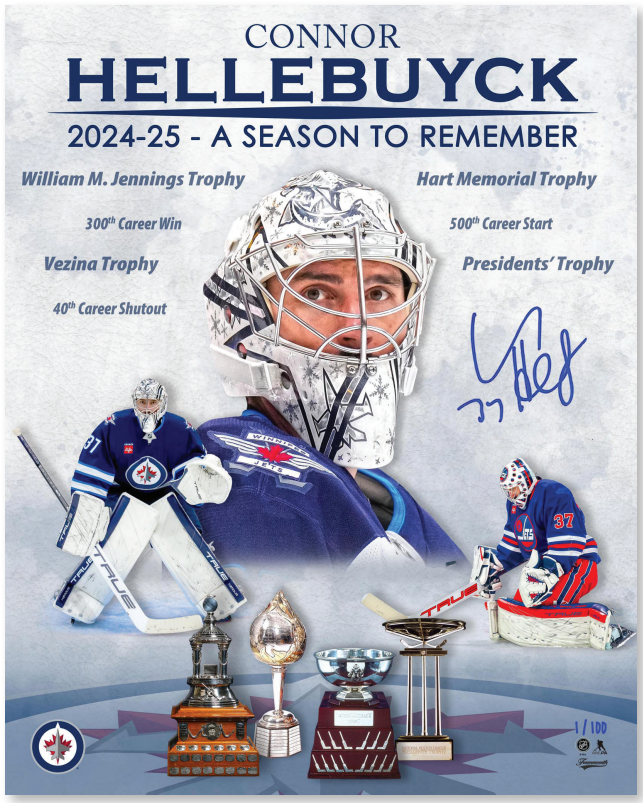
CELEBRATING 30 YEARS 1996-2026

204.837.1764 | greenbladewinnipeg.ca



HELLEBUYCK'S SEASON TO REMEMBER

This magnificent, autographed wall-hanging, unframed is 16" wide by 20" high and features a celebration of Connor Hellebuyck's remarkable 2024-25 season. 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.



It just might have been the greatest single season by a goaltender in National Hockey League history.

Connor Hellebuyck put up remarkable numbers during the 2024-25 season and won the Hart Trophy, presented to the player adjudged to be the most valuable to his team; the Vezina Trophy, given to the goalkeeper adjudged to be the best at this position; the William M. Jennings Trophy, presented to the goalkeeper(s) having played a minimum of 25 games for the team with the fewest goals scored against it; and led the Jets to the Presidents' Trophy, awarded to the team that finishes in first-place overall during the NHL's regular season.

It was indeed, a Season to Remember. 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 winner of the Hart Trophy, the Vezina Trophy (three times), and last year won his second-straight William Jennings Trophy. 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' 2026 Olympic Team.

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

CUSTOM FRAMING FOR THE ENTIRE HOME

Jerseys ~ Artwork ~ Shadowboxes

"You Name it ~ We Frame it !"

Autographed Memorabilia **Sports Cards and Supplies**



JoeDaley's

Sports & Framing

513 ST. MARY'S ROAD - (204) 783-8430



WINTER CLUB HOCKEY:
AN EXECUTIVE PLAYING EXPERIENCE

BY JOHNSTON HALL
Photo courtesy of the Winnipeg Winter Club

When the Winnipeg Winter Club opened its doors in 1929, one of the driving forces behind it was Donald Henderson Bain.

Known as DH to his friends, he was the captain of the Winnipeg Victorias when they captured hockey's holy grail, the Stanley Cup, in 1896 and 1901. Known as a multi-sport athlete, he was also a competitive figure skater.

Now, as the Winter Club nears its Centennial, one of Bain's greatest legacies is 100 years of athletic achievements, and lasting social connection.

With a proud legacy of developing provincial and national champions in figure skating, hockey, tennis, badminton, and squash, the Winnipeg Winter Club has long been a hub for athletic excellence and family tradition.

"The Club's roots are in ice sports and this legacy in ice sports lives on at the Club today," said Casie Nishi, Winter Club CEO. "From first steps on the ice, to youth hockey development and competitive figure skating, the Club keeps members of all ages engaged on the ice."

The Club Hockey program is ideal for busy professionals. Members sign up ahead of time for the days they want to play, and teams are arranged each session to ensure a fun, competitive experience.

It's an inclusive community of players. The Club Program features young AAA players, some past University level players, some past pro players, and players who some may consider older -- while others consider them just smarter on the ice.

"We have a fantastic hockey community," said Winter Club member Jim Krovats. "We have fun, fast games that are played with respect to the varying abilities of the players. Safe hockey with a great diverse group of players. I have made many great new friends through the Club Hockey Program. I think it's the best hockey program anywhere".

Designed for busy professionals and busy parents who value the opportunity to play at prime time -- and with the added benefit of a post-game steam in the steam room – the WWC



provides on-site lockers that offer the convenience of not having to transport equipment to the rink.

"The best thing about club hockey is how you get the even balance of friendship with competitiveness," said WWC member Derek Okabe. "Nothing beats being able to play an hour of hockey and getting a good workout all while being in the company of such friendly people. This program is also amazing for my busy schedule as there are multiple skates a week that I'm able to get to all while managing a young family and business."

Recognizing that hockey development is a lifelong pursuit, the Club offers adult Skills & Drills early on Wednesday mornings. With adults taking a knee to watch Coach Tommy draw out the next drill, they get a great workout while improving their on-ice skills. The post-skate breakfast club is a draw as well!

"In adult league play, you do not always get enough touches or opportunities to build your skills," said WWC member Katrina Armstrong. "Skills and Drills has helped fill that gap, and the sessions are also just a ton of fun! I always leave with something new to work on, and I've seen real progress in my game. It's a reminder that no matter your age or experience, there is always room to grow.

And being among only a few females who play Club hockey, Katrina added that from her first time on the ice, the Club hockey group welcomed her with open arms.

"It is fast, fun, and includes a wide range of players across different ages and skill levels," she said. "Programs like this help show that hockey is for everyone, and I hope more women feel comfortable giving it a try."

In addition to our thriving adult hockey program, the Club has also taken steps to provide members with youth skill development opportunities. The Winter Club recently announced their strategic partnership with Evolution Hockey; a premier hockey development organization and Manitoba's first licensed Hockey Canada Skills Program. Starting this fall, Club members will have priority access to Evolution Play programs at the Winter Club, and the Club now has Evolution Hockey Coach Zach Watson, as their Head Hockey Pro.

"Having a Head Hockey Pro will continue to elevate the programming at our Club." says Casie Nishi, CEO. "We see hockey as more than just a game. It brings people together. It teaches commitment, resilience, and how to make tough decisions under pressure. It builds community, lifelong friendships and teaches us what it means to work together as a team. And these lessons stay with us long after we hang up the skates."

For more check out www.winnipegwinterclub.com

MERIT GROW AND GOLF

MERIT CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA WERE PLEASED TO HOLD OUR NINTH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT ON JUNE 11

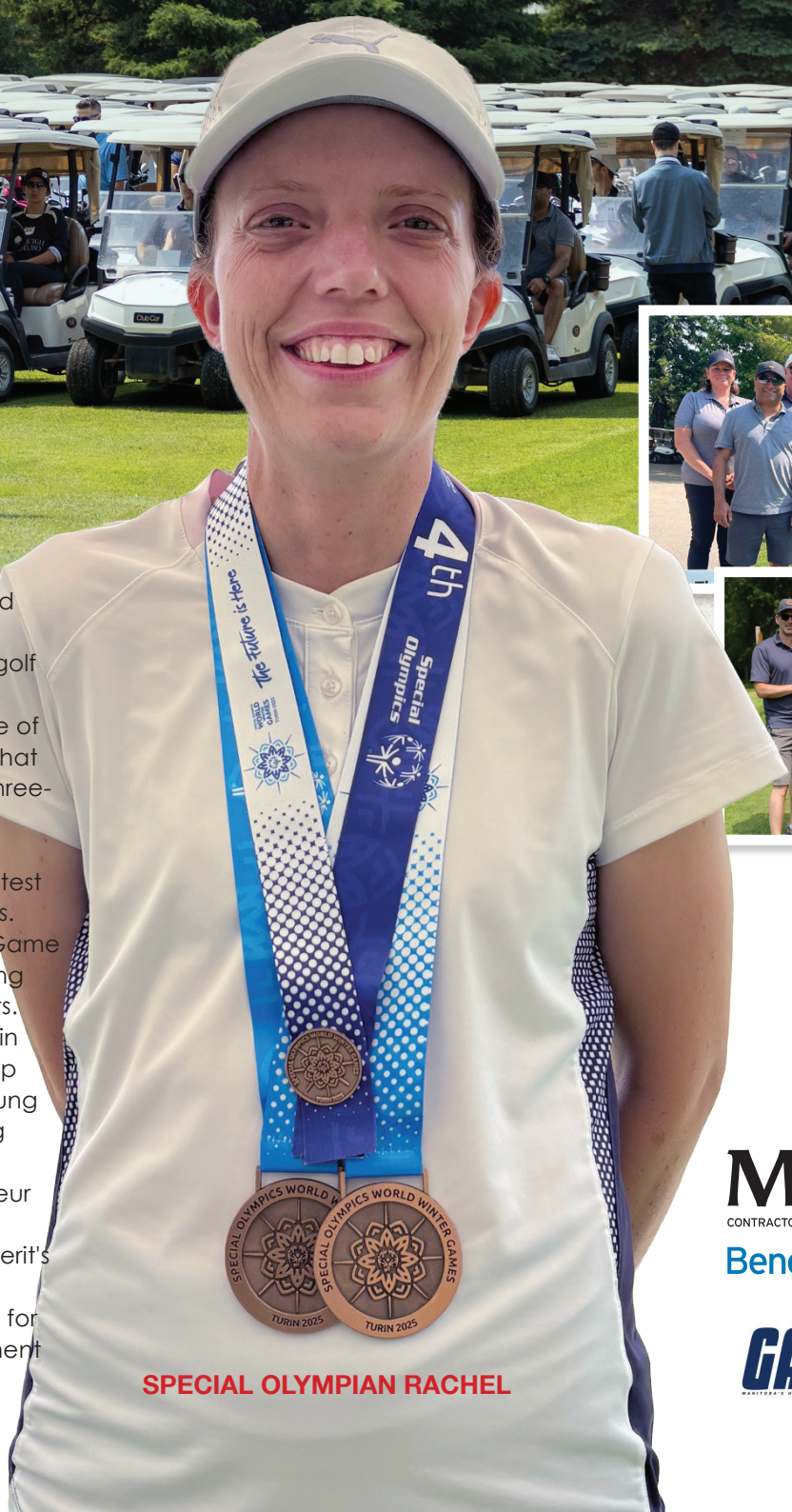






We had a wonderful day including members, contractors, suppliers and other colleagues who enjoyed a great day of golf and networking. We also celebrated G.R.O.W. one of the great organizations that we support. Rachel, a three-medal Special Olympics Winter Games winner manned our putting contest as she has done for years. Thank you to G.R.O.W., Game On and our other amazing sponsors and participants.

Merit supports fairness in tendering, apprenticeship and opportunities for young people who are entering the trades. We enjoy our engagement with amateur hockey and other sports within the community. Merit's membership is growing, and we thank Game On for their continued involvement with our organization



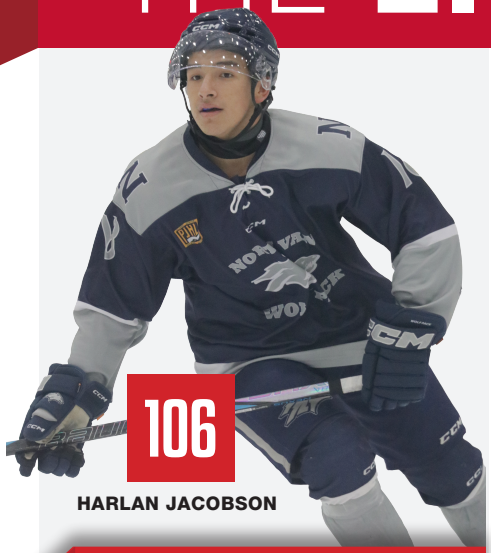
SPECIAL OLYMPIAN RACHEL

MERIT
CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA
Benefits Built In

GAME ON

THE LINEUP

SEPTEMBER 2025
TRAINING CAMP ISSUE



106
HARLAN JACOBSON

COMMUNITY

MWJHL 84
MJHL 88
MFHL 92
CRJHL 96
KJHL 100
MMJHL 108
U18 AAA 116

SCHOOLS & TRAINING FACILITIES

BALMORAL HALL 26, 128
PILOT MOUND 28, 140
THE RINK.....120, 132
MANITOBA ABORIGINAL SPORTS & RECREATION COUNCIL 124
MANITOBA HOCKEY HALL OF FAME.....136

COLUMNS

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.....11
THE INSIDE EDGE WITH GLENN BRUCE & CHELSEA MCCRIMMON 34
SPORTS SCIENCE WITH DR. JEFF LEITER.....36
CONDITIONING WITH AJ ZEGLEN 56
THE FINAL WORD WITH CARTER BROOKS 146



96
DYLAN LISKE

MANITOBA'S BEST

CELEBRATING OUR PLAYERS OF THE MONTH



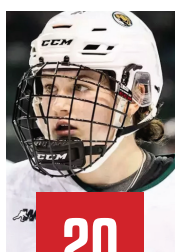
14
GABE VILARDI



16
CODY GLASS



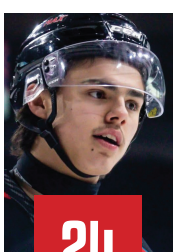
18
AVERY LALIBERTE



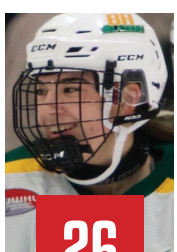
20
MORGAN SMITH



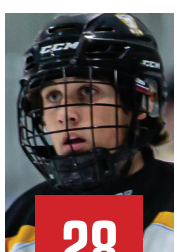
22
WYATT DYCK



24
HAYDEN PAUPANEKIS



26
KARA YACKEL



28
BENSON HIRST



30
ANTHONY JACOB



31
MANNY MINUK

GAME ON RECOGNITION



12

Defenceman of the Year

Meet Denton Mateychuk, Game On Magazine's 2025 Defenceman of the Year.

THAT'S IT, BACK TO WINNIPEG 38
37-year-old Jonathan Toews – Winnipeg's Prodigal Son – has returned to the city where he first laced up. Next up, a Stanley Cup with the Jets?

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS 42
Winnipeg Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff had himself a busy summer – Will his big-money signings of Gabe Vilardi and Dylan Samberg pay off?

LOVING THE GAME, JUST LIKE DAD 44
Teenagers Ronan and Kegan Maan aim to follow in their father's footsteps, all the way to the pros.

CHAMPIONS OF DIVERSITY 48
For 15-year-old Brayden Chan, hockey has always been the family business. Thanks to the Winnipeg Jets First Shift program, he's taken it national.

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME 52
Winnipeg's Filipino community plays host to a hockey jamboree for both new and advanced players.

HOCKEY FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY 58
From beginner skating to adult and youth hockey programs, hockey for all centre has it all.

WIRED FOR THIS 64
A true student of the game, Manitoba Moose goaltender Dominic DiVincentiis' makeup is just right to handle adversity.

A MILLION BUCKS A GOAL 68
After a breakout campaign in Boston, Strathclair's Morgan Geekie has signed on for six more years in Beantown.

SIZE DOESN'T MATTER 112
Despite his smaller stature, Owen Vanrobaeys has the skills and the right attitude to be a key piece to the puzzle in Pembina Valley this season.

BALMORAL HALL



128

NEW BLAZERS COACH READY FOR A CHALLENGE

Aaron Kaatz was already excited about the opportunity to coach the Balmoral Hall Blazers this season, he just wasn't prepared for his warm welcome to the school.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Carter Brooks

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Manny Martins-Karman

GAME ON
MANITOBA'S HOCKEY COMMUNITY

PRESIDENT
Sean Davis

VICE PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER
Scott Taylor

CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHIC EDITOR
James Carey Lauder

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS
Rusty Barton, Darryl Gershman, Merlin Heppner, Kelly Jacobson, Jonathan Kozub/Point Shot Photography, Danny Truong, James Carey Lauder, Scott Stroh/Ice Wave Media, Rayme Thomson, Ray Peters.

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Megan Miscavish, the Cleveland Monsters, Images on Ice/ Hockey Hall of Fame, Bemidji State University, the Winnipeg Winter Club, Madelyn Haasken, Nick Lacoste, Lucas Rotondo, the Kelowna Rockets, Trinity Western University, Tammy Steiner, Anne Leslie, Todd Pederson, Duncan Hasker, Colgate University, Allan Chan, Ron Cantiveros, Cole Bradley, the Boston Bruins, Travel Manitoba, Jeff Miller, the Peguis Juniors, Bruce Fedyck, Lexi Minuk, the River East Royal Knights, Genevieve Dussault, Dylan Asmundson, Scott Taylor, the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame, the Manitoba Indigenous Sports Hall of Fame, Andrii Knyhnytskyi.

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Johnston Hall, Glenn Bruce, Chelsea McCrimmon, Jeff Leiter, Christina Klysh, AJ Zeglen, Frankie Benvenuti, Paul Edmonds, John Jameson.

COVER PHOTO BY
JAMES CAREY LAUDER (JONATHAN TOEWS)
DARCY FINLEY (CANADA LIFE CENTRE)

GAME ON magazine is published five times per year by:

davis media company

PRESIDENT
Sean Davis

VICE-PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER
Jay Cumming

VICE-PRESIDENT OF SALES AND MARKETING
Kara Gabriele

DESIGN AND LAYOUT
Sivananthan Kannan

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

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed by the authors and/or editorial sources contained in *Game On* magazine are those of the respective parties and do not necessarily represent the opinion or views of the magazine or of the publishers. All published work is edited for accuracy, style and clarity. We do accept unsolicited material as long as it refers to athletes, coaches and/or volunteers involved in hockey in Manitoba.

Subscriptions in Canada $45.00 plus GST for one year.

Payment may be made by cheque, Visa or MasterCard to:
The Davis Media Company Inc.
Suite 601, 63 Albert St.
Winnipeg, MB R3B 1G4

Subscribe by phone: 888-705-8870
Online: www.gameonhockey.com/store
By email: info@gameonhockey.ca
www.gameonhockey.com

© 2025 Game On Manitoba Inc.
All rights reserved. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without the written consent of Game On Manitoba Inc. or its publisher.

Publications Mail Agreement # 43361037
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
The Davis Media Company Inc.
Please recycle where facilities exist.

YEAR 13 | EDITION 5 | 2025

Magazines Canada

PICK UP YOUR SOCKS!

I recently became a father – a dog father, that is. And my goodness, it has been a change to what I thought was an already hectic, frantic and schedule-oriented lifestyle. Going from a daily routine based off of the Jets' home/away schedule to a new day-to-day consisting of regular pee/poo breaks, kennel time, doggy daycare drop-off/pickup and leash, collar and harness training, things have most certainly been flipped head-over-heels at the Brooks residence this offseason.

Yes, you read that correctly, we call summertime the offseason at our place. Getting a dog amid the 82-game regular season was most definitely not an option. And with the Jets operating at their Presidents' Trophy pace last season, I wasn't even sure if May or June were going to be in the cards. But, much to the dismay of Jets fans across the province, Winnipeg faltered in the second round against Dallas, helping pave the way for a May 31 purchase date of our dear Milton.

I'd tell you it has been all sunshine and rainbows over the past four months, but there have been some challenges along the way. The daily 6:00 AM morning feedings have been a bit more difficult than I imagined. For a guy who tends to stay up as late as possible, often writing well into the morning hours, that change has led to a few more morning headaches in the office. Remembering to be the first one to pick up sweaty socks after daily workouts has also been more of an obstacle than one might think.

This all got me thinking of professional athletes and the daily rigours that they face – with or without any major lifestyle changes. Gabe Vilardi told me last season that he and his girlfriend adopted a puppy. I checked in with him on how things were going later in the season and he just rolled his eyes and said, "ugghhh," before sitting down in his stall, shaking his head and sharing a laugh with linemate, Mark Scheifele, who famously adopted a pair of goats a few seasons prior.

I'm just a sports reporter, but even I have had a tricky time with changes. How can professional athletes who are being paid millions of dollars a year handle something that could be so detrimental to their sleep schedules, eating habits, workout routines and simply put, daily life as they know it?

Josh Morrissey, Kyle Connor, Adam Lowry, Neal Pionk... pretty much all the Jets' star players have canine counterparts. What each of those players also have are extremely supportive and helpful life partners, who are clearly up to the task. So, Margot, Ally, Laura, Megan, Britt and Kiera, well done. Handling a full-time hockey player is a task on its own. Adding an animal or two to the mix, that's another job-and-a-half. The behind-the-scenes efforts that I am only now discovering are second to none. Your husbands/boyfriends/fiancés most certainly appreciate the work put in.

With the hockey season now back in full flight and our household one member larger, the 50-some-odd evenings this cold winter season that I spend downtown at the rink shouldn't be quite as lonely for my better half going forward.

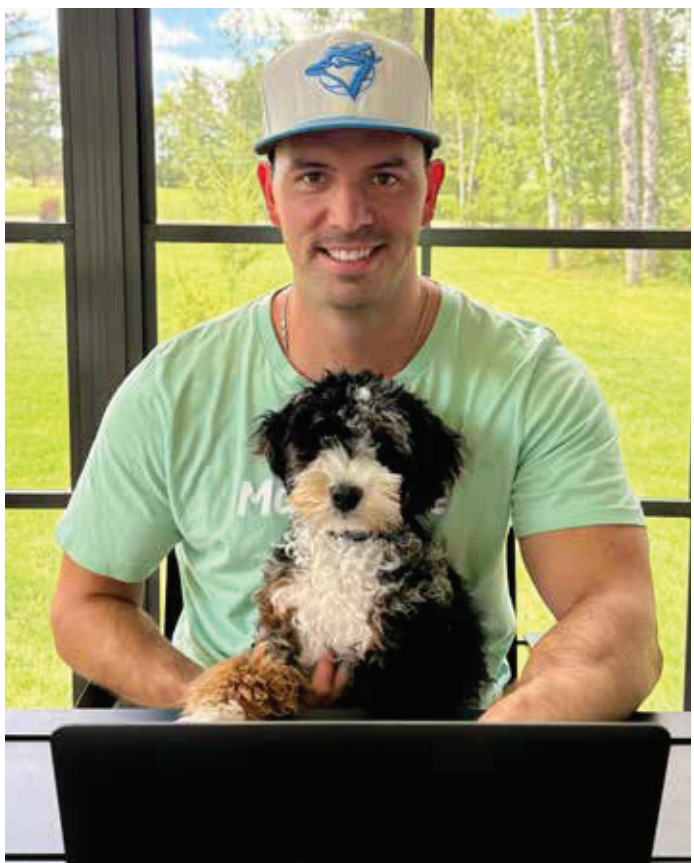


PHOTO BY MEGAN MISCAVISH

GAME ON MAGAZINE'S 2024-25
MANITOBA DEFENCEMAN OF THE YEAR

DENTON MATEYCHUK

Photos courtesy of the Cleveland Monsters and the Hockey Hall of Fame/Images on Ice

The Columbus Blue Jackets' promising young blueliner, Denton Mateychuk, is the 2025 Game On Defenceman of the Year.

The 12th overall selection from the 2022 NHL Draft, Mateychuk split the 2024-25 season between the AHL's Cleveland Monsters and the big league Blue Jackets.

Serving as his first year as a professional, the now 21-year-old put up four goals, 13 points and 20 penalty minutes in 45 NHL games, while adding another nine goals and 25 points in 27 games – operating at nearly a point-per-game rate with the Monsters.

Standing at just 5-foot-11 and weighing 185 pounds, Mateychuk has been compared to Winnipeg Jets' standout defender Josh Morrissey – not only for his build, but his physical attributes and playing abilities.

Making the jump following a five-year career with the Moose Jaw Warriors that concluded with a championship in 2023-24, the Dominion City product will look to bring his WHL Defenceman of the Year and Playoff MVP skillset to the fold in his first full, 82-game season with the Blue Jackets.

DEFENCEMAN OF





THE YEAR

PRESENTED BY

WMGT

WESTERN MARBLE GRANITE & TILE



GAME ON

MANITOBA'S HOCKEY COMMUNITY



GABE VILARDI

13

FORWARD // SHOOTS RIGHT // 6'3"

BORN AUG. 16, 1999 // KINGSTON, ON.

2025-26 TEAM: WINNIPEG JETS

2024-25 SEASON STATS
WINNIPEG JETS

71
GAMES

27
GOALS

61
POINTS

Gabe Vilardi made his intentions known this past July when he signed a six-year, $45 million contract to remain in Winnipeg through the 2030-31 NHL season. The now 26-year-old Kingston, ON. product wants to win and believes that sticking around with the Jets gives him the best shot at that possibility. Coming to Winnipeg as the key piece of the return in the Pierre-Luc Dubois summer blockbuster of 2023, Vilardi has found a new home on the Jets' top line and power play unit. He put up 27 goals and 61 points in 71 games last year and will look to establish new career highs alongside running mates Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor this season. Climbing a few rungs up the payscale, Vilardi's $7.5 million annual average value puts him among some of the league's elite players, a role he envisions as he enters the prime years of his professional career.



Photos by James Carey Lauder

hockey for all centre

Esso ICE LAB

JETS HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT



PRIVATE GOALTENDER LESSONS

CHOOSE YOUR PREFERRED NUMBER OF SESSIONS

PICK 1

PICK 5

PICK 10

PURCHASE AND BOOK ONLINE

204.926.5869

AKOLLAR@TNSE.COM



CODY GLASS

12

FORWARD // SHOOTS RIGHT // 6'3"

BORN APR. 1, 1999 // WINNIPEG, MAN.

2025-26 TEAM: NEW JERSEY DEVILS

2024-25 SEASON STATS

PITTSBURGH PENGUINS & NEW JERSEY DEVILS

65
GAMES

6
GOALS

22
POINTS

Back in early-July, the New Jersey Devils announced the signing of Cody Glass to a two-year contract worth $2.5 million annually. The 26-year-old Winnipeg product joined the Devils by way of a trade deadline deal from Pittsburgh, where he had signed following a three-year residency in Nashville. Having only suited up in 14 games for the Devils at the end of last season, New Jersey's front office and management staff determined the small sample size was enough to reward the former U15 Winnipeg Hawks AAA star with the $5 million contract. Glass put up two goals and seven points in his 14 games, producing at a high rate in his limited showing. The former sixth overall selection of the Vegas Golden Knights (2017) has 35 goals and 93 points to his name in 252 career NHL games. Glass will look to pick back up in 2025-26 right where he left off last spring.



Photos by James Carey Lauder



CRUISES & SO MUCH MORE

Enjoy the same expertise you've come to trust for every type of travel. As your neighborhood Vacation Consultants, we are committed to providing our community with extraordinary vacations by air, land, and sea.







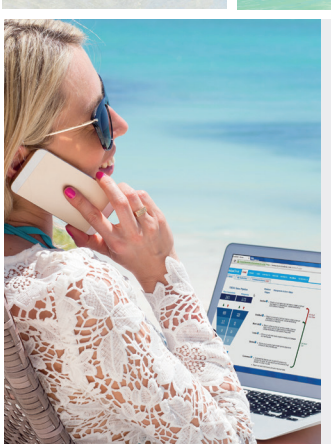












Everything you need to manage your travel business is just one click away

JOIN OUR TEAM

Become part of Expedia Group™ and join our sales team of over 6,100 Vacation Consultants.

FLEXIBILITY | ONGOING SUPPORT | FUN

In North Winnipeg (204) 421 5611
In South Winnipeg (204) 224 7447
www.ExpediaAgents.com/Winnipeg

Air, Land & Sea Vacations

YOU NAME IT, WE DO IT.

ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORTS
COACH & RAIL TOURS
VACATION PACKAGES
HOMES & VILLAS
INSURANCE
FLIGHTS
HOTELS
ACTIVITIES

At Expedia Cruises™, we are here to help you plan your next big adventure, every step of the way. Whether it's booking a flight with enough leg room, planning an onshore adventure in port, or finding the perfect pre-cruise hotel, we will help you customize an unforgettable vacation that delivers on your individual needs and desires – all at Expedia prices!

If you are looking to stay ashore, we offer all-inclusive resort packages and coach & rail tours that cater to all types of travelers, from the budget-minded to the luxury-inclined. Fill your days with as much or as little as you'd like – our team of professionals take care of it all from the moment you walk through our door. Our expertise in everything from car rentals to travel insurance will ensure your vacation is truly spectacular.

Leverage expert advice you can trust on your next adventure, wherever it takes you.

Contact your Expedia Cruises™ Vacation Consultant today!

Expedia Cruises
Air, Land & Sea Vacations

Call, Click or Come in.

In South Winnipeg
154-2025 Corydon Avenue
(204) 224 7447
www.expediacruises.com/Winnipeg

In North Winnipeg
Unit 10 - 963 Henderson Hwy
(204) 421 5611
www.expediacruises.com/Kildonan



AVERY LALIBERTE

8

DEFENCE // SHOOTS LEFT // 6'2"

BORN SEPT. 17, 2006 // LORETTE, MAN.

2025-26 TEAM: NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY (NCAA D-1)

2024-25 SEASON STATS

NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS (MJHL)

53
GAMES

7
GOALS

39
POINTS

Niverville Nighthawks defenseman, Avery Laliberte, earned an invitation to Winnipeg Jets Development Camp, skating and training with the top prospects from our local NHL Presidents' Trophy champions. Laliberte has been a staple on the Nighthawks' blueline over the last two seasons where he has played a combined 106 regular season games, adding 9 goals and 50 assists. Laliberte spent three seasons playing for the Eastman Selects U14, U15 and U17 AAA teams and then spent a year at the RINK Hockey Academy Winnipeg where he was outstanding, scoring 12 goals and 25 points in 24 CSSHL games. In April of this year, Laliberte was added to the playoff roster of the Western Hockey League's Everett Silvertips and in September of 2024, he committed to play NCAA Division 1 hockey at Northern Michigan University.



Photos by James Carey Lauder and Scott Stroh

Crafting Dreams:

ELEVATE YOUR LIFESTYLE WITH OUR CUSTOM HOMES



Come walk through your future home. Our showhomes are open.

An Award Winning Custom Home Builder

Sage Creek, Taylor Farm, Oak Bluff West, Bison Run, or on your own lot

www.avanticustomhomes.net

10 YEARS

AVANTI

CUSTOM HOMES



MORGAN SMITH

21

FORWARD // SHOOTS LEFT // 5'8"

BORN FEB. 3, 2006 // WINNIPEG, MAN.

2024-25 TEAM: BSU BEAVERS (WCHA)

2024-25 SEASON STATS

BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY BEAVERS

37
GAMES

11
GOALS

20
POINTS

Balmoral Hall Blazers grad Morgan Smith had a brilliant 2024-25 freshman season with the NCAA D-1 BSU Beavers. She was named Rookie of the Week in the WCHA three times and Rookie of the Month for December. She recorded two hat-tricks last year – Dec. 14 against Minnesota State and Feb. 15 against St. Thomas. Both came on the road. At BH, she was selected to the First Team All-Star of the Junior Women's Hockey League in 2022-23 and was voted the Blazers MVP that same year. Smith, who grew up in East St. Paul, was Team Manitoba's captain at the U18 Nationals in 2023 and had four goals and eight points in five games during the tournament. This season she will wear an 'A' at BSU, only the fourth sophomore in team history to wear a captain's letter.



Photos by Madelyn Haasken and Bemidji State University



We've got your dedication, drive and success in mind with plans built specifically for the construction industry, represented right here in Manitoba.

- Comprehensive Employee Benefits
- Advocacy & Lobby Support
- Training & Education Programs
- Career Advancement & Promotion

PROUD TO SUPPORT THE WOMEN'S JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE

MERIT
Benefits Built In
MANITOBA

meritmb.com



WYATT DYCK

12

FORWARD // SHOOTS RIGHT // 5'10"

BORN MAY 8, 2008 // WINNIPEG, MAN.

2025-26 TEAM: WINNIPEG BLUES (MJHL)

2024-25 SEASON STATS

WINNIPEG BLUES

54
GAMES

10
GOALS

15
POINTS

Wyatt Dyck is a Winnipegger who starred in the Winnipeg Wild organization before joining the MJHL's Winnipeg Blues last season. He played for U16 Team Manitoba at the WHL Cup in 2023-24 and then this past May, the proud citizen of the Red River Metis Nation, scored four goals in seven games to help Indigenous Team Manitoba win the gold medal at the National Aboriginal Championship in Kamloops, B.C. "Wyatt competes every shift," said Team Manitoba GM Kevin Monkman. "He has a good sense for the game and skill to match. He scored some big goals for us at the championships. He's a natural leader and a good teammate." Dyck was selected by the Spokane Chiefs in the sixth round (112th overall) of the 2023 Western Hockey League Prospects Draft.

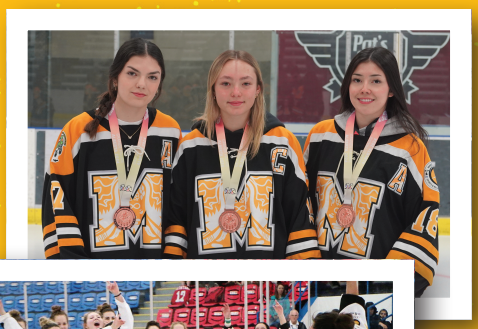
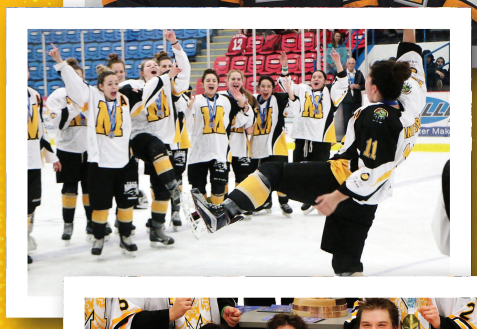
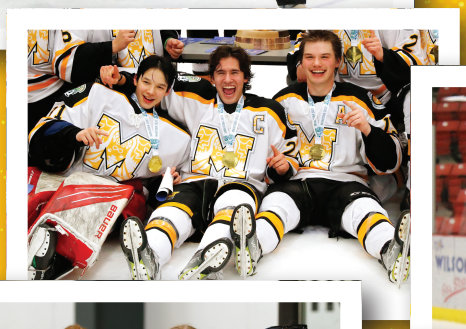


Photos by Nick Lacoste and Lucas Rotondo

DID YOU KNOW?

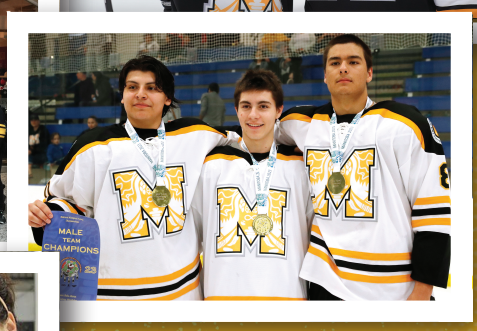
That Manitoba's male and female teams at the annual National Aboriginal Hockey Championships are administered by:

THE MANITOBA ABORIGINAL SPORTS & RECREATION COUNCIL










MANITOBA ABORIGINAL SPORTS & RECREATION COUNCIL

THE MANITOBA ABORIGINAL SPORTS & RECREATION COUNCIL

145 PACIFIC AVENUE // WINNIPEG, MB
R3B 2Z6 // 204-925-5737

WWW.MASRC.COM // INFO@MASRC.COM



HAYDEN PAUPANEKIS

23

FORWARD // SHOOTS RIGHT // 6'5"

BORN FEB. 4, 2007 // WINNIPEG, MAN.

2025-26 TEAM: KELOWNA ROCKETS (WHL)

2024-25 SEASON STATS

SPOKANE CHIEFS/
KELOWNA ROCKETS

71
GAMES

22
GOALS

43
POINTS

A large young man at 6-foot-5, 205 pounds, Paupanekis was born and raised in Winnipeg (Monarchs and Wild) and is a member of Norway House Cree Nation. Ranked No. 38 among skaters by the NHL's Central Scouting Bureau, Paupanekis was selected in the third round (69th overall) by the Montreal Canadiens in the 2025 NHL Entry Draft. Back in 2023, Paupanekis was one of the finest players in the CSSHL, starring for the RINK Winnipeg, and leading the RINK U18 AAA Prep team in scoring with 30 goals and 49 points in just 39 games. He also played for Team Manitoba at the 2023 Canada Games in Nova Scotia and then came home and played for Indigenous Team Manitoba at the 2023 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships in Winnipeg. At the NAHC, Paupanekis led Team Manitoba to the gold medal. Originally selected in the WHL Draft by the Spokane Chiefs, he was dealt to Kelowna in the middle of the 2024-25 season.



Photos courtesy of the Kelowna Rockets

Shoot to Score Hockey





Jamie and Reggie Leach
Father and Son Stanley Cup Champions!

We Fly to You!





At Shoot to Score we know the difficulties of bringing in quality instruction to communities who are quite a distance from bigger cities.

Instead of having the community sending a few players to a hockey camp outside there area, **we will come to your arena and run a camp for every one of your minor hockey players!**

We can bring up our experienced crew, **operate an entire camp in your community**, and give the opportunity to develop to ALL of your players, instead of a hand-picked few.

Indigenous NHL Alumni Team

Get your local coaches involved in the camp and you have an experience that can drastically improve your associations skill level and confidence on the ice!

Making the game more enjoyable for everyone involved.

Tryout-Ready Conditioning Camp

Conditioning Camp

September 3 - 6, 7 Oaks Arena

- Male & Female | 2008 - 2017
- 6:1 Instructor to Player Ratio
- 5 Hours High Intensity On-Ice Drills and Games

$225 Goalies $225

More Info: SHOOTTOSCOREHOCKEY.com

204.797.8049 SHOOTTOSCOREHOCKEY@ICLOUD.COM



KARA YACKEL

8

FORWARD // SHOOTS LEFT // 5'9"

BORN OCT. 19, 2004 // WEST ST. PAUL, MAN.

2025-26 TEAM: TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY (USPORTS)

2024-25 SEASON STATS

TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY

28
GAMES

6
GOALS

11
POINTS

After a tremendous three-year stint at Balmoral Hall, Kara Yackel has gone on to become a major contributor to the success of the Trinity Western Spartans. Heading into her fourth year at TWU, she's scored 15 goals and 24 points and has suited up in all 84 of her team's league games. "Kara is very skilled at putting herself in other people's shoes," said her coach at BH, Sarah Zacharias. "She was a natural leader on our team." A kinesiology major at TWU, Yackel intends to play all five years of her U-SPORTS eligibility with the Spartans. "Playing at BH was an honour," she said. "It was an honour just to get there. Putting on the jersey everyday was a reminder of how grateful I was to be there. But I do love Trinity Western. I've really enjoyed every year I've been there."



Photos courtesy of Trinity Western University and Tammy Stewner

BALMORAL HALL SCHOOL

MELIORA PETENS

SEIZE YOUR MOMENT











SKATING TO SUCCESS STARTS HERE:

APPLY NOW FOR 2025–2026



BENSON HIRST

6

DEFENCE // SHOOTS RIGHT // 6'1"

BORN NOV. 2, 2008 // LAC DU BONNET, MAN.

2024-25 TEAM: NORTHERN MANITOBA BLIZZARD (MJHL)

2024-25 SEASON STATS

PMHA BUFFALOES

24
GAMES

12
GOALS

13
POINTS

It's unlikely there has been a better example of the importance of having played for Pilot Mound Hockey Academy than Benson Hirst. Hirst jumped from the Eastman Selects AAA U15 to PMHA in 2022-23 and had 2 1/2 solid seasons with the Buffaloes. Last year, he played 24 games of U18 Prep at PMHA before jumping to the MJHL's Northern Manitoba Blizzard where he helped the Blizzard win the Turnbull Cup, emblematic of the Provincial Jr. A championship. Midway through his time in The Pas, the MJHL announced that Hirst had committed to play NCAA Division 1 hockey at Northern Michigan University. After only 21 regular season games and 12 playoff games with the Blizzard, he had made the jump to NCAA D-1 hockey, but in reality, he became a good student and a highly-skilled, D-1 ready player at PMHA.



Photos by Anne Leslie and Todd Pederson

PILOT MOUND HOCKEY ACADEMY

"Western Canada's most all-inclusive hockey development experience"



WHY PLAY AT PILOT MOUND?

Ice Time / Fitness: Daily scheduled and regular 'free time' on ice practices, strength and conditioning sessions, and shooting / stick handling bay sessions, equating to 1000+ hours of dedicated hockey development over the 10 month all inclusive hockey program.

Education: PMCI is highly-recognized provincially and provides standard, custom, and flexible programs for our student athletes in a small class size setting, all with the regular support of student advisor(s). This, coupled with daily study hall sessions, enables focused learning and continued academic success.

Development: Seasoned coaches with a trusted and proven plan that support student athletes in working hard, staying focused, developing their game, and playing within a team environment toward continued hockey development success.

Exposure: Regular exposure to junior, college, and USports scouts and advancement opportunities; league, tournament, and showcase play in Canada and the US within the CSSHL and NAPHL; full game play and media coverage through Flo Sports, GShow Productions, TPE, and Game On Magazine (check our our Player Advancement page on our website)

Focused: Family oriented, small community atmosphere that provides a disciplined, focused, fun, and barrier free opportunity to focus on progressive hockey, academic, and citizenship development.

Facilities: Individual, private dorm rooms per student athlete; dedicated dressing room per team, huge open rec and dining areas; plenty of delicious and nutritious meals and snacks; and a safe community in which to live and flourish.

Value: PMHA is truly Western Canada's most all-inclusive hockey development experience where student athletes come to live, learn, play, and advance their hockey development, academic, and citizenship goals with little distraction.

READY TO PLAY?

INQUIRE at

pilotmoundhockeyacademy.com

SCAN ME





Photos by James Carey Lauder

MANNY MINUK
GOALTENDER

66
CAREER STARTS

74
SAVES IN FINAL GAME

2,161
CAREER SAVES

The River East Royal Knights will look very different for the 2025-26 MMJHL season. Manny Minuk Sr. has taken over behind the bench, and with him comes former Royal Knights players-turned-assistant coaches, captain Anthony Jacob and goaltender Manny Minuk Jr.

"It's the perfect transition from my playing career with the Knights, as I can now stick around a great group of guys, while helping fuel my passion for competitive hockey," Jacob said. "Manny and I were part of a leadership group last year that helped create a strong culture in the dressing room. We hope to help translate that into some success in the win column."

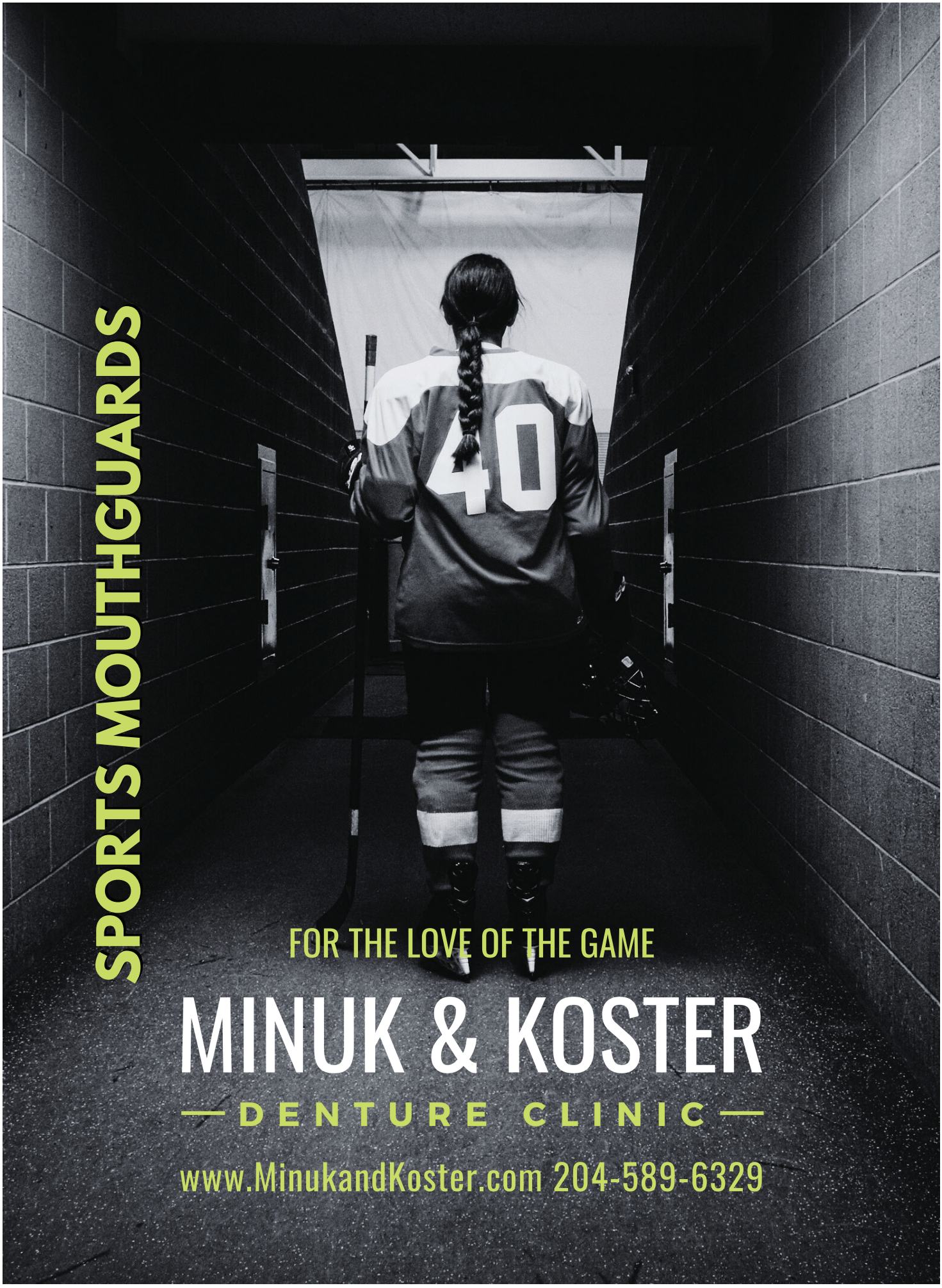
"I want to help give the guys here the on-ice success that they deserve," Minuk Jr. said. "There are people around the league who think Anthony and I are too young or under qualified to be on the staff; that's something that just drives us to research, work and prepare extra hard to unlock this team's full potential for this season and years to come."

ANTHONY JACOB
FORWARD

19
GOALS

30
POINTS

108
PENALTY MINUTES

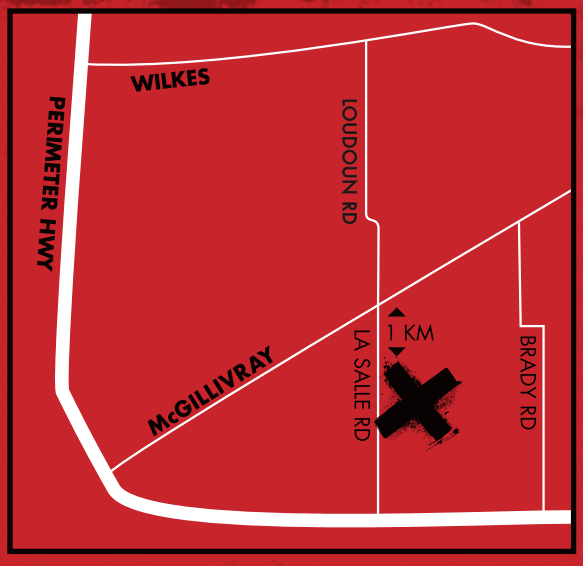

SPORTS MOUTHGUARDS
FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME
MINUK & KOSTER
DENTURE CLINIC
www.MinukandKoster.com 204-589-6329


HEEBIE JEEBIES
Over 1km of mazes!
B. Oddly
Escapes, Magic, Stunts and More!
Winnipeg's Most Dangerous Performer
LIVE! Nightly
PAYTOGETIN.
PRAYTOGETOUT.
CANADA'S #1 PRIVATELY OWNED HALLOWEEN ATTRACTION!
Fireworks every Saturday night and unlimited re-entry to all mazes.*
*SELECT NIGHTS ONLY
21 Interactive PHOTO OPS
4 FOOD Trucks
5 Carnival GAMES
The Electric Chair EXPERIENCE!
$1 HOT CHOCOLATE (all proceeds to charity)
TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE ONLY
HEEBIE-JEEBIES.CA

OCT 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 30, 31 • 7PM – 11PM

OCT 11, 16, 17, 19, 23, 24, 26 • 6:30PM – 12 MIDNIGHT

OCT 18, 25 • 6:30PM – 12:30AM



53071 LA SALLE RD.
1 KM SOUTH OF McGILLIVRAY BLVD.
INSIDE THE PERIMETER

Come into our haunted corridors where you'll encounter scenes straight out of your worst nightmares. Or linger outside with your fellow scaredy-pants, where there will be food trucks and photo ops.

Each of our **five mazes** varies in length from **8–12 minutes**, while taking years off your life. **SO MUCH TO DO YOU MAY NOT SEE IT ALL!** Sorry, no costumes allowed.

Expect fog, strobe lights, special effects, over 150 animatronic scares, and more than 140 costumed actors. Our cast will never make physical contact with Heebie Jeebies guests.

See these creatures and more, in flesh and bone and all their grisly, gory glory!

5 INCREDIBLE MAZES! – ONE PRICE

THE HOLLOWS · BOBO'S FUNHOUSE · CELL BLOCK 13 · BUNKER Z · SASKATCHIE CUZZIES

Over 140 actors! • Over 150 animatronics scares!
HEEBIE JEEBIES merch • Bonfires

NEW FOR 2025:

- **Over 20 new characters**
- **35 new animatronic scares**
- **7 new photo ops**
- **4 new giants**
- **SEE GIANT FRANKENSTEIN! One of only three in the world and the only one of his kind in Canada!**
- **New HEEBIE JEEBIES merch**

OVER **2,300** FIVE STAR REVIEWS

★★★★★ Google

TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE ONLY

HEEBIE-JEEBIES.CA

No costumes or face paint allowed.

While we don't have an age restriction, HEEBIE JEEBIES is not recommended for children under 13 years of age.



RESETTING THE TOOLBOX

– Glenn Bruce

Speed is the operative word for today's game of hockey. From Rocket Richard to Connor McDavid, the game has evolved drastically. My takeaway from this year's NHL Global Coaches Conference in Toronto is that speed is essential for exiting the defensive zone, pushing the puck north in the neutral zone, and creating horizontal space and time in the offensive zone.

"Resetting the toolbox" is when a player has established a neutral position, eyes up, back straight (0-45º angle) hips down, knees over toes, and ready to move in any direction, any time. Resetting the tool box allows players to use their dominant skill set and signature move(s) offensively and defensively at their own will. Players who can be off-balance, but in control tend to be competitive. But to be dominant, you must be able to be off-balance and then regain balance within tenths or hundreds of a second.

How does this apply to speed training? It starts with training the body from the ground up! Strengthening the foot-ankle complex, knee joint, hips, and fascia is first on the list. The next step is to prescribe various speeds, angles and heights while in various states of motion (stop, slow up, post up, quick up, explode). The goal is to simulate what happens on the ice to dryland training. As difficult as it sounds, it is possible. The only constant is resetting the toolbox, or what used to be called the Ready Position.

MASTERING THE MIND AND BODY

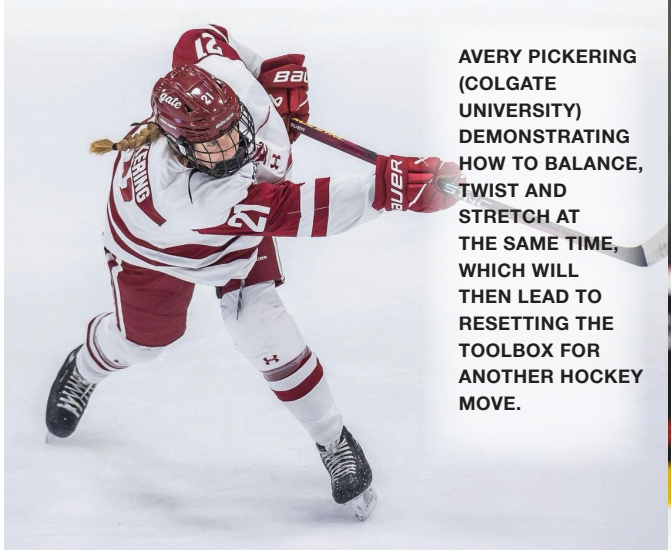
– Chelsea McCrimmon

Proprioceptive or body awareness starts in the yoga studio and then the same principles are being taught in dryland training and then on the ice.

An intentional yoga practice can be a critical tool in learning to negotiate the body in space, allowing you to move from unstable and often "compromising" positions, back to neutral instantly. Sequences that focus on dynamic balance and cross body work are excellent examples of skills on the mat, that will translate onto the ice. The consistent flow of moving away from and returning to your center trains those small stabilizing muscles (think better movement, joint protection, balance) but also resets the neurologic feedback, clearing out resistance, or "static" that impacts movement. For simplicity sake, think of it as rewiring your brain to allow your body to move more efficiently.

Equally important, is the way yoga trains the fascia (remember that web of saran wrap that encases everything in our body?) and other soft tissue. This training is important because our tissues have the ability to store and release elastic energy, much like a spring. This means you can generate greater force with less effort (who wouldn't want that?). Additionally, healthy tissues play a crucial role in protecting our joints, reducing the risk of injury, and speeding up recovery. It's truly a win-win-win!

We can expand the idea of "resetting the toolbox" beyond just the physical body. Yoga's mental aspects can teach you how to return to a neutral state after every game, shift, setback, or win. It's counterproductive to get too caught up in the highs or too down about the lows. Yoga can help you achieve self-mastery over both your mind and body, which is what truly sets you apart from the herd.



AVERY PICKERING (COLGATE UNIVERSITY) DEMONSTRATING HOW TO BALANCE, TWIST AND STRETCH AT THE SAME TIME, WHICH WILL THEN LEAD TO RESETTING THE TOOLBOX FOR ANOTHER HOCKEY MOVE.



JETS DRAFT PICK MARKUS LOPONEN RE-SETTING THE TOOLBOX BEFORE EXECUTING AN ATHLETIC MOVEMENT.

Photos by Danny Truong and Colgate University

MCNAUGHT CADILLAC

PROUD TO SERVE MANITOBA'S HOCKEY COMMUNITY

70+ VEHICLES AVAILABLE

PAYMENTS AS LOW AS
$299 BI-WEEKLY



EXPERIENCE THE MCNAUGHT CADILLAC DIFFERENCE

OUR CUSTOMERS RECEIVE:

- FREE BREAKFAST WITH EVERY SERVICE APPOINTMENT
- COMPLIMENTARY AIRPORT PICK UP AND DROP OFF SERVICE*
- FREE OIL CHANGES FOR FIRST 4 YEARS*

*SOME EXCLUSIONS APPLY. SEE DEALER FOR DETAILS.

1717 WAVERLEY ST, WINNIPEG, MB
WWW.MCNAUGHTCADILLAC.COM | 204-594-4590



TRYOUTS OR TRAINING CAMP?

WE'VE ALL FELT THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION FROM HOCKEY TRYOUTS

Training camp or tryouts? Call it what you will. Been there, done that, as a player, coach, sport scientist and dad. Regardless of age or level, the stress is real, the physical exhaustion can be overwhelming, and the outcome? The outcome can be complete exhilaration or deep (but temporary) physical, mental and emotional despair.

If you are a player, coach or parent preparing for the upcoming season, you know what I am talking about. Is this the way it has to be? Can we manage the entire process better? Well, unfortunately and fortunately, as a player I was cut more times than a golf green. Yes, at the time it was unfortunate, but fast forward to the next training camp and the one after that, you learn a thing or two and that's the fortunate part. Because yes, the process can be managed better and it comes down to how you prepare.

Preparation: physical, mental, and emotional.

PHYSICAL – Get your body healthy. If you have nagging old injuries, or more recent injuries, dedicate time to rehabilitation and reconditioning. You want to perform your best and with some teams, passing a physical assessment by a physician or therapist is required prior to participation. Secondly, know what to expect. Will there be off- and on-ice testing? If so, find out what tests you will be performing and prepare for those tests several weeks in advance. In addition to increasing your performance, this will also take away some of the anxiety associated with training camp. The first day of training camp shouldn't be the first time you step on the ice in months; get on the ice a couple weeks beforehand and work on the skills they will be looking at in camp.

MENTAL – Set specific and realistic goals for yourself. 'Making the team' is of course the ultimate goal, but this is too broad and every player wants to make the team. Focus on yourself and what you do well, be confident. For example, "I am going to be fast in my first five strides on every drill and get five shots on goal during the scrimmage". Don't compare yourself to the other players, there is always someone that shoots harder, or skates faster, regardless of how skilled you are. Most importantly, visualize and get excited about the plays you want to make, not the ones you don't. Positive thoughts are energizing, focusing on the negative will only drain your energy and increase anxiety. Take one drill, one shift and one ice-time at a time, and go do what you do best!

EMOTIONAL – Two things are under your control in a training camp: your work ethic, and your attitude. Work hard, at everything. If you make a play that you don't like, keep your chin up and go make a better one. Be respectful with everyone you interact with in camp; it matters! Teams want good players that are really great people. Remember, sports are supposed to be fun, and you will have more energy and play better when you enjoy the experience. Every ice time is a gift so when your blade hits the ice, just enjoy the freedom of the fastest game on earth.



NO MATTER HOW GOOD YOU ARE, NO MATTER HOW BRIGHT YOUR FUTURE, EVERY TRAINING CAMP OR TEAM TRYOUT CAUSES SOME PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION. 2025 NHL DRAFT PICK OWEN MARTIN AT WINNIPEG JETS DEVELOPMENT CAMP

Photo by James Carey Lauder

Fuel research & innovation that helps Manitobans bounce back from injury to action, from pain to performance.

MAKE A SPLASH WITH THE

panam CLINIC | Foundation

50/50 RAFFLE!



Draw Date: Sept 17th

SCAN ME

BY CARTER BROOKS
Photos by James Carey Lauder, Rusty Barton and Scott Stroh

THAT'S IT, BACK TO WINNIPEG!

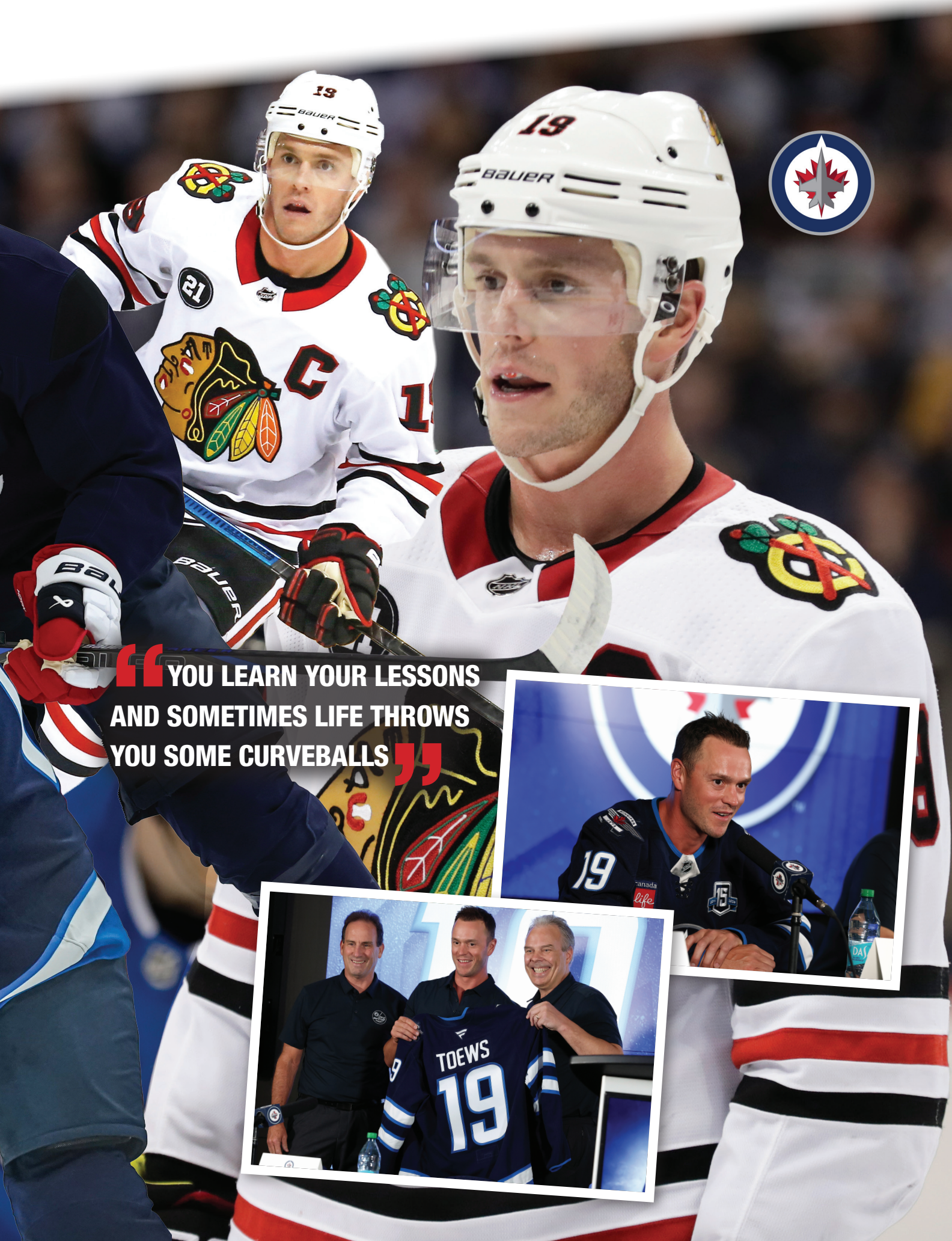


The Winnipeg Jets were the talk of the hockey world in late-June. Just a week before the official start of free agency, the Jets announced the signing of local product Jonathan Toews to a one-year, incentive-laden contract. The news caught most off guard – everyone but Toews himself, it seemed.

"It really got to a point where I couldn't see myself wearing any other jersey," Toews said when meeting the media in Winnipeg for the first time. "It wasn't something where you write down the pros and cons on a piece of paper. To me it wasn't rational at all. It was more of an intuitive thing where it just felt right. You can go over the million reasons why, but I didn't have to call my mom or dad or my brother, anyone really. I just knew in my heart that this is what I wanted to do, so it felt good every step of the way. I'm really excited to be a part of it."

Choosing Winnipeg just felt right. For the kid who grew up playing hockey on the pond in St. Vital, coming back home to sign with the team he cheered for as a child was the perfect way to put the cherry on top of an uber-successful professional career.

"I had a handful of teams and cities that I thought about, and as it got closer and had a few more conversations with (agent Pat Brisson) I had a few conversations with Mark Chipman as well which were very helpful," Toews recalled.


"YOU LEARN YOUR LESSONS AND SOMETIMES LIFE THROWS YOU SOME CURVEBALLS"
TOEWS
19



"I've got to give him credit. He was checking in once in a while. It's been quite some time now. And I think that was a huge part of really starting to clue in on what the reality of playing here would be like."

So, for a guy who has won World Junior gold, World Championship gold, Olympic gold, three Stanley Cups with the Chicago Blackhawks and the Conn Smythe Trophy as playoff MVP, what's left to prove?

According to the now 37-year-old forward, a lot.

"A couple of years ago, I missed the shortened season before I went back to Chicago," Toews shared. "In a way, and since I hit the ice and have really been skating these last months, it didn't feel like that much time had gone bye. It is a long time on paper if you are playing hockey. A lot of things have changed with the league: the teams are different, and the game is different and all. For myself, it went by in the blink of an eye. At this time I am trying to be realistic about what the challenges are, trying to meet those and prepare myself, knowing that you can be in really good shape and work your tail off all summer but you kind of forget the grind of an NHL season until you are 15 or 20 games in and it is non-stop."

For Toews, it was lengthy battles with Long COVID and Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome that kept him away from hockey for considerable periods of time. He last played a full 82-game season in 2018-19 but has suited up in 194 games since that point. His last NHL contest with the Blackhawks came on April 13, 2023 – a night to which he scored his final power play goal with the team.

"You learn your lessons and sometimes life throws you some curveballs," Toews said. "It's easy to play the victim card. When you have a certain lifestyle, the people around you, the things that you do, the routine that you have, all of the things that hold you up as a person, and all of that kind of falls apart, it's a pretty uncomfortable experience for sure.

"A lot of people go through difficult times and it's something that I try to keep the mindset and the attitude that 'it's not happening to me, it's happening for me.' I try to learn from it and I try and grow. When you have a health issue, that's what healing is: you're just taking a look at your life and trying to find balance within it all. Without getting too much cheesier than that, I'll leave it at that. It is something that you grow older and wiser and it's part of life. I'm thankful for it."

In leaving a legacy in Chicago to return to the city that raised him, the 6-foot-2, 200-pound centre will certainly face an overload of scrutiny. Throw in the fact that he hasn't played hockey in two full seasons. That's about enough to scare most away. But not Captain Serious. According to the guy who holds the U15 AAA Winnipeg Warriors' record for most goals (98) and points (193) in a season (48 games played), it's just another challenge he's ready to face head-on.

"It was hard to really see myself wearing any other jersey," Toews repeated. "I think day by day, this is becoming more real, and it will as we get closer to the season, too, and I'm looking forward to it. It's an exciting time and it's another fresh opportunity. I watched a lot of hockey in the playoffs this year and there's a lot of guys at my age that are still contributing in any way that they can, so that's the outlook I'm coming into this with, too. To be that guy that, whatever it is, whatever part of my game or who I am as a person that can be valuable to the team, I'll do my best to bring that forward and help the team any way that I can."



SINGLE GAME TICKETS ON SALE

NOW!

TICKET OPTIONS AVAILABLE

4 OR 6 GAME PACK	PASSPORT

WINNIPEGJETS.com/Tickets

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

BY CARTER BROOKS
Photos by James Carey Lauder and Scott Stroh

Winnipeg Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff did not take much time off this summer, rather turning his attention to the necessary needs of his hockey club. Of course, he made his first big splash with the Jonathan Toews signing. Some key unrestricted free agents – most notably veteran forwards Tanner Pearson and Gustav Nyquist – also gave their signatures on the dotted line, but it was two critical internal pay raises that really got the ball rolling forward for 2025-26 and onward.

First, key trade acquisition Gabe Vilardi made his long-term intentions known when he signed a lucrative six-year, $45 million deal that will see him don the polar night blue through the 2030-31 season.



"From the end of the season, whenever I started thinking about this stuff, it was never in any question for me," the former Los Angeles Kings first round draft pick said of the negotiation process. "I always wanted to be back in Winnipeg, so it was important that we got it done and we didn't get to arbitration; I don't think anybody wanted that. So, how it played out was almost inevitable."

In his media availability following the announcement of his signing, Vilardi took things one step further, actually professing Winnipeg as his second home.

"I mean, I've been here two years now and I love it in Winnipeg," Vilardi added. "I think, you know, the opportunity for us to win

in our window here of four or five years is something I'm very excited about and I want to be a part of. And I love Winnipeg. It's a great spot. It feels like home to me. The fans, the team, the organization, everybody has been welcoming to me in Winnipeg since I've been there and it's been great. So, it made it a pretty easy decision for me."

It's really not all that often that someone who has grown up near the busy metropolis of the Greater Toronto Area and played the first part of his professional career in the warm climate of Los Angeles expresses his desire to be in a city that regularly dips into some of the coldest temperatures in North America when the hockey season rolls around.

"On the outside for guys looking in, you have to figure out what you want," he continued. "Do you want to go live in a warm climate and maybe play on a worse team, or do you want to come to Winnipeg and, sure, it's minus-30, but you're going to be on a good team. At the end of the day for me, it's about hockey. I want to win, I want to be a good player. That's my top priority in life. So, it's easy to overlook the cons and look at the pros for me."



GABE VILARDI



DYLAN SAMBERG

Another pro who will be sitting right beside Vilardi in the dressing room is defenceman Dylan Samberg. After preparing to present their respective cases to an independent arbitrator, the two sides sorted out their differences and came together on a three-year, $17.25 million deal that features an annual average value of $5.75 million - a hefty upgrade from the $1.4 million he earned last season.

"There are some nerves that go into it, especially as you get down to the deadline and what not, but I'm glad we were able to agree on a deal and get things moving forward," Samberg said of finding common ground.

Samberg, whose hearing was scheduled for July 30 in Toronto, actually boarded his flight and made it to the site of the NHL's head offices in advance of the Wednesday meeting. But much to the relief of the now four-year pro, the two sides struck an agreement in the late-night hours on the 29th.

"It was all new for me, in a sense," he laughed. "I've never gone through a process like this. There was a lot to learn, but it was cool to learn it all. We eventually agreed on a deal the Tuesday night before the hearing, so it was good."

Having fully established himself as one of the league's top shutdown defenders, Samberg will look to prove his worth to Winnipeg over the next three seasons, before making life difficult for Cheveldayoff once again come summertime, 2028.

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by James Carey Lauder

LOVING THE GAME, JUST LIKE DAD

RONAN AND KEGAN MAAN LOVE HOCKEY ALMOST AS MUCH AS THEIR FATHER.

Their father, Ganni Maan, is hopelessly in love with the game. Always has been. A successful Winnipeg businessman, Ganni is one of the Winnipeg Jets' First Shift Ambassadors and he takes the assignment very seriously.

There are few things he wants more than to get more South Asian kids on skates and then registered for hockey.

"To have the success rate we're having with First Shift is quite satisfying," Ganni said. "The program is busting at the seams, we can't keep up with the registrations. To see so many of those kids graduate on to Second Shift and continue their hockey journey – joining their club teams and joining their community centres and continuing on – has been very satisfying.

"Our goal is to use that platform to populate that hockey registration gap that has been created over the years and fill it from communities that, honestly, never had hockey on their radar. We want hockey to be an option for kids and then they try it and fall in love with it, they will carry on and have every opportunity to be successful at it."

Both of Maan's youngsters, 14-year-old Ronan and 12-year-old Kegan, have not only taken to the game as players, they've also joined First Shift as coaches. Both all-around athletes, hockey has become an integral part of their winter activities.

"I've been playing hockey for about eight years now and I'm just 14 now," said Ronan. "My highest level has been A1. Now I play A2 for Seven Oaks Raiders. I just love playing hockey with my friends. I love competition, too, but the most important part of the game for me is spending time with people I like.

"Education is No. 1 for me, but I'm a baseball player, too. I'm a first baseman and I love that I'm a little short for a first baseman. Baseball creates more patience and that leads into hockey. It's also a change of sport and keeps you active throughout the whole year. I like golf, too.

"I want to get better at hockey because I feel like I've been stuck where I am a bit. It's the improvement that's important and that's





hockey for all centre

GANNI MAAN WITH HIS HOCKEY-PLAYING BOYS, KEGAN 12, AND RONAN 14



a reason why I'm spending more time in the gym."

Kegan, 12, has a clear reason for loving the game. However, like so many young Canadians, Kegan loves a number of different sports.

"I like the skating and scoring goals," he said. "There is nothing better than scoring goals. I just really like it.

"I like baseball and golf, too. I kind of like the summer sports a little better than hockey. I like working out in the gym, getting ready for next season. The gym is good for hockey, baseball and golf."

Over the past decade, Winnipeg has experienced significant population growth, driven largely by immigration. The Filipino community has been the fastest-growing group in the city, followed closely by the South Asian community. In 2011, when the Winnipeg Jets returned, these two groups made up about 13 per cent of the city's population. By 2026, that number is expected to rise to nearly 24 per cent. This demographic shift presents an opportunity to grow the sport of hockey by engaging and including these communities.

"Hockey can be an intimidating sport in which to get started," said David Sattler, General Manager of the hockey for all centre "There is a need to be more intentional in growing interest for the game and boosting registration across all community areas – and especially among these new and growing demographics."

That's why First Shift exists and it's why Kegan Maan loves to coach the younger kids. He might only be 12, but he knows youngsters love to watch and be coached by older kids who look just like them.

"I like coaching First Shift and the part I like best is that these kids are just new into hockey and there is something about that just feels good to me, seeing other people who have never really heard of hockey, just go on the ice and have a great time," Kegan said. "That's what makes me feel happy about coaching at First Shift."

For Kegan and Ronan's dad, hockey has always been a big part of his life. Although he never had the opportunity to play ice hockey, he was a young street hockey star who grew up glued to the TV watching Hockey Night in Canada.

"For me, I was a street hockey kid who loved and followed the Winnipeg Jets and kept the stats and cared about the team," Ganni said. "I shared it with the whole family about how awesome the Winnipeg Jets are.

"Now my kids are hockey players. It's about trying to get a whole generation of kids to switch from hockey as a secondary thought to hockey as a first thought when it comes to sports. Street hockey now is a backup plan. We want to get kids involved in ice hockey. Getting kids onto the ice is our priority.

"As the father of two boys, I wanted them to lead by example. Anyone can play hockey, but the most important thing is you have to learn how to skate. You have to go through all of the programs, and you have to become part of that ice hockey system. It starts at TimBits, it starts at all the Learn to Skate programs and it starts at First Shift. If they develop a passion for the sport and a real love for the game, then by all means they should go and register and get that first hockey jersey. But it all starts with learning how to play skate and play properly.

"They've never played super competitive hockey but they just love being on the ice. As a parent, that's the best thing. That's the most fun we can have – developing this love for the game."

Ganni is a first-generation Canadian while his boys, of



THE FIRST SHIFT AMBASSADORS, FROM LEFT: ALLAN CHAN, GANNI MAAN AND RON CANTIVEROS WITH MICK E. MOOSE

course, are second-generation. They're Canadians who are still a big part of their South Asian community. However, culturally, they are much different people than their grandparents.

"Neither one of them would even think of playing the sports their grandparents watched back home," Ganni said with a laugh. "Ronan and Kegan are second-generation kids and they have no connection whatsoever with anything ancestral or has been passed down from other generations. But they do have field hockey in their blood. You look at all the amazing players from the Indian national field hockey team and you see their skill sets and you watch the Punjabi kids playing in Canada now and you can see that translate into ice hockey.

"Right across Canada you can see these Indian kids taking to ice hockey and they all seem to have an amazing snipe. It's pretty cool to see their hands and how natural they are at it. Somehow, they all seem to have this hereditary passion for hockey."

Most importantly, for Ganni, hockey is just one of the many opportunities he and his wife want to offer his boys.

"We're there to support the kids in whatever sport they choose," he said. "They love baseball, and they love golf. We're a very seasonal city here in Winnipeg so we like to create that multi-sport, try-everything approach. Some things have stuck while some haven't. We tried soccer, that didn't work out, but they love baseball, love golf and are big fans of hockey. It's working very nicely for them to be involved.



RONAN (LEFT) AND KEGAN MAAN AT SHERWIN VASALLO'S ACCELERATION PERFORMANCE.

"We want to raise well-rounded kids that love sports, however, academics is always the No. 1 priority. Being first generation kids, my wife and I, both being born and raised in Canada, this is what our parents came here for – to build that better life and that starts with education. It's been driven into us and along the way, we just pick up things that we happen to be good at.

Ganni is proud that both of his sons are coaching in the First Shift program.

"They are at First Shift volunteering every Saturday and they're there to make sure young kids can look up to them," he said. "The little kids who see people who look like them, who can skate well is something they can aspire to and know it's achievable, and is happening right in front of them. That's the mindset of First Shift – to give kids the opportunity to be able to see themselves in the same frame and have that representation right in front of them.

"For too many years now, thousands of Canadians have adored hockey from afar, not knowing where their place is in the game," Maan added. "For a variety of reasons, communities have struggled to find their place as fans. Since the return of the Jets, I've been somewhat obsessed with changing that narrative. Hockey isn't just for everyone; hockey needs to welcome everyone. That's the power our game possesses."

hockey for all centre



TEAMMATES: BRAYDEN CHAN (RIGHT) WITH HIS BEST FRIEND LUCAS MARANA AT THE NATIONAL ASIAN HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS IN TORONTO.



FIRST SHIFT

CHAMPIONS OF DIVERSITY

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos courtesy of Allan Chan

For 15-year-old Brayden Chan, playing hockey is about as much fun as any kid can have.

This past spring, however, it might have been the most fun he's ever had playing hockey.

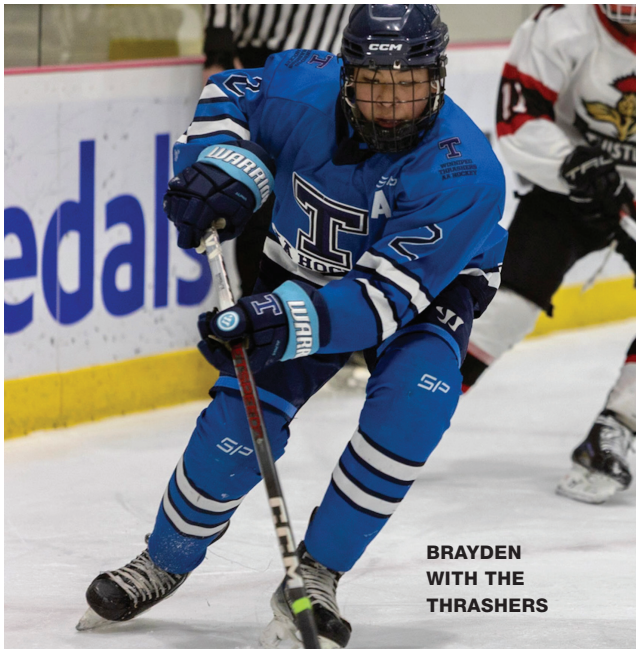
Back in May, Brayden and his best friend, Filipino star Lucas Marana, went to Toronto to participate in the 35th Asian Hockey Championships, a celebration of Asian-Canadian hockey players at every possible level.

"Brayden's team competed in the 2009-2010 Division," explained his dad, Allan Chan, who is not only one of the Winnipeg Jets First Shift Ambassadors, but is also the coach of the Winnipeg Emperors, the 2024 Asian Hockey Championships' Masters champs.

"It's a combined age group. He and his best friend Lucas Marana – they grew up together in the River East area – went together. This was Lucas's second time going down to the tournament. The first time Lucas went down with Brayden, they reached the tournament finals and lost. Brayden has played a couple of times since then, but this time, Bray had his best friend join him and they got together with the Markham Monsters, and they had a great team. The kids from down there were very welcoming, very hospitable and Lucas and Brayden made great friends right away.

"They were 2-1 in round-robin play, got through the playoffs and met the team they had lost to in the round-robin in the championship game. They won it 4-0. It was a very exciting time for them. Brayden was ecstatic because he's been to the tournament so many times, never won, yet watched his dad win and lose with the men's team. The last two years, he never won a game in the round-robin. But this year, he had a team that had a bunch of GTHL (Greater Toronto Hockey League) kids, and they were great kids who bonded together early and came up with a great tournament."

For the record, Allan's Winnipeg Emperors made it to the semi-finals



BRAYDEN WITH THE THRASHERS

before bowing out to the eventual champions, a Toronto-based team called the Teriyaki Ticklers.

"We lost in overtime. It was a great game," Allan said. "In the end, it's always a good time. It's always a good tournament and that's why we keep going back."

Brayden, meanwhile, has a big season ahead. According to his father, there is an opportunity on the Miles Mac Buckeyes high school team, "So Brayden knows he'll have to play well to earn that spot."

"I play football, lacrosse, hockey and golf," explained Brayden who obviously enjoys playing a number of sports. "I play Thrashers AA and I play lacrosse and football at Miles Mac. I also love playing golf with my friends. But next winter, I hope to play for the Miles Mac hockey team. I just started my spring camp in May. It's a busy schedule."

According to Allan, Brayden "will play high-level hockey someplace." There is an option to play AA or AAA, but Brayden really wants to make the Buckeyes.

"If I can play hockey for the school team, then all of my schedules will work better," Brayden explained.

As well, for the game of hockey – and for Canada -- a change is coming. And that change could be profound.

According to David Sattler, the general manager of Winnipeg's hockey for all centre, in order to stem the decline in hockey registrations, a focused effort to grow the sport is needed.

"If you look at Manitoba's demographics over the next 20–30 years, South Asian and Filipino communities will represent a significant share of our population—as will Indigenous Manitobans," he says.

"If we don't have kids sign up for minor hockey, we don't have kids who grow up to be fans of the Winnipeg Jets and the game in general."

Winnipeg's visible-minority population has surged from 19.7 percent in 2011 to 34.4 percent in 2021. The biggest jumps belong to the Filipino community and the South Asian community—growth of roughly 48 percent and 170 percent during this same time period.

Youth hockey is heading in the opposite direction. Hockey Canada's U18 registrations fell from 523,000 in 2009 to about 412,000 in 2022—a 22 percent slide. Some analysts peg the longer-run drop closer to 35 percent when introductory programs are included.

That urgency fuels the Grow the Game pathway at the hockey for all centre. The initiative, backed by Scotiabank's "hockey for all" fund, covers equipment, ice time and culturally-responsive coaching to grow the game amongst the largest growing communities in Winnipeg. "We want kids on the ice, but we also want their families in the stands," Sattler explains. "We're hoping this will build bridges and create diversity in a sport that, right now, is lacking."

This coming change makes a young player like Brayden Chan an important cog in the game's future. He's an Asian-Canadian who loves his country's national passion.

"I started skating when I was about two," he explained. "My dad took me to the Learn-to-Skate program at CanLan. My earliest memory of hockey is getting my gear for the first time and trying it on in front of the mirror with my dad. Then I played my first organized hockey with Timbits



BRAYDEN (LEFT) WITH WINNIPEG JETS DRAFT PICK KEVIN HE



BRAYDEN CHAN (LEFT WITH THE TROPHY) AND LUCAS MARANA (RIGHT) CELEBRATE WINNING THE ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

in North Kildonan. That was a really fun year. We played in a tournament at hockey for all centre and it was very cool to try a sport for the first time.

"The following year, I played Timbits again and then I played 9A1. I was the younger age trying out and I made the Royals. That's when I decided I really love this sport. I've loved hockey ever since."

His coach last year with the Thrashers, Pat Blank, believes Chan's future as a hockey player is firmly within his own hands.

"Brayden is a respectful young man," said Blank. "He's willing to listen and learn. I would categorize him as a two-way defenceman. When he gets a chance, he can rush the puck, set up plays and even score, but he can also battle and defend in the defensive zone.

"In terms of hockey, I think Brayden's future is in his hands. Playing AA hockey at U13 and then being passed over in his first year of U15AA, Brayden didn't let that get him down. His effort in (last) year's tryouts showed his improvements with skating, foot speed, and puck handling, and made him stand out.

"One of his best character traits is his attitude. He always has a positive attitude through the ups and downs and puts in an effort on each shift. Brayden is very well-liked in the locker room. He brings a sense of humor and positivity to the room. Brayden has the right attitude to push himself and keep improving. With that his future is bright. If he pursues a higher level of hockey that's up to him, but I hope he stays with the game. Whether he plays or coaches he has a good future."

As far as Brayden is concerned, hockey will always be a big part of his life. Especially, the annual Asian Hockey Championships in Toronto.

"My dad is a very big influence," Brayden said. "He loves the game, too, and I'm sure you know he has his own team, the Winnipeg Emperors. The Asian Hockey Tournament is very special to me. I really look forward to going down to Toronto every May long weekend. It showcases kids of Asian descent from all across Canada and It's cool to me that there is a lot of interest in this game from Asian kids all over.

"I want to play hockey as far as I can go. Whether that's playing junior or playing beer league with my dad on Sundays. I just love the game."



THE NATIONAL ASIAN 2009-2010 AGE GROUP CHAMPIONS



FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME

WINNIPEG'S FILIPINO COMMUNITY PLAYS HOST TO A HOCKEY JAMBOREE FOR BOTH NEW AND ADVANCED PLAYERS



IT'S FILIPINO HOCKEY JAMBOREE TIME!

BY CHRISTINA KLYSH
Photos by Ron Cantiveros

As part of June's Filipino Heritage Month celebrations, Filipino hockey players gathered at hockey for all centre for a jamboree, dedicating a day to share their love of hockey.

Bringing together so many young hockey players and Filipino families who are fans of the sport is something Ron Cantiveros couldn't have imagined when he helped spearhead an initiative to increase the number of Filipino hockey players in Manitoba three years ago.

"If you had asked me what Filipino hockey could look like, I would never have imagined we'd be where we are today," said Cantiveros, a player who still enjoys rec league hockey and a rookie head coach for his son's U9 team. "None of this would have been possible without that first Filipino Heritage Night game and all the initiatives that have grown from it."

Cantiveros was first connected to True North Sports + Entertainment and hockey for all centre as a cultural ambassador for the Winnipeg Jets Filipino Heritage Night, which celebrated its third anniversary in the 2024-25 season. As well as celebrating culture and inviting new fans to enjoy the sport, Filipino Heritage Night also raises money through an auction and merchandise sales which go toward initiatives important to the Filipino community, and this year, that included the inaugural Filipino Heritage Hockey Jamboree.

The event welcomed around 50 Filipino hockey players made up of minor hockey league players and First and Second Shift participants. First Shift is a program organized through hockey for all centre that makes hockey more accessible for families new to the sport. Cantiveros is the connection between the program and the Filipino community, and over the past three years he has introduced more than 120 Filipino youth to hockey.

"There's 100,000 Filipinos in Manitoba. While some might assume we all play basketball, there's interest in other sports as well," said Cantiveros. "The opportunities we've had as a community to learn how to skate and play hockey have been truly remarkable."

The Filipino Heritage Hockey Jamboree gave players a chance to have five uninterrupted hours



HOCKEY IS FOR EVERYONE

of fun and competitive scrimmaging. As the First Shift program mostly focuses on drills and skill development, many of its players had never had an opportunity to play an actual hockey game.

"A lot of the participants and parents hadn't experienced hockey past those First Shift and Second Shift opportunities. It was a completely brand-new experience for them because they've never been a part of organized hockey or a jamboree."

The event also gave youth and their parents an opportunity to connect with a larger community of Filipino hockey players and their families.

"It was really important for the kids to see that there are other hockey players that look like them and talk like them," said Cantiveros. "The parents loved it, and they were able to meet other Filipino hockey parents."

One of those parents was Joslly Matienzo. Watching her son Lucas learn a new sport in a setting that reflected their culture and community made the Matienzo family excited to get him more involved in hockey.

"It was a real eye-opener for many in our community. A lot of families, especially those with young kids curious about hockey, saw firsthand what's possible," said Matienzo. "It gave us hope and inspiration that our children can also be part of this sport in a meaningful way."

Mixing more advanced hockey players and beginners also helped showcase the growth of hockey in the Filipino community, and the opportunities for Filipino players to reach the next level.

"For the more advanced players and their parents, it was an opportunity for them to see how much interest there is in our community. They've never seen what the First Shift and Second Shift programs look like, it's a lot bigger than they imagined," said Cantiveros. "For the First Shift players and their parents, seeing players like them at a higher skill level made them excited for their own potential and what might be their next step."

Cantiveros knows that a barrier for families new to hockey is the unknown of what minor hockey might be like. He's now in a coaching role for his son's team, but being fairly new to minor hockey himself, Cantiveros understands the impression that navigating minor hockey programming can be intimidating. However, he encourages parents to take that step for their kids.

"If your kids are excited to play hockey, you have to do everything you can to support them. More than just the on-ice portion, through First Shift, families can learn more about minor hockey, other hockey opportunities, and most of all, enjoy the sense of community that hockey brings."



COACH RON CANTIVEROS

2025 FALL + WINTER PROGRAMS

- ESSO LEARN TO SKATE
- ADULT LEARN TO PLAY
- ADULT LEARN TO SKATE
- REC HOCKEY PROGRAM
- FIRST SKATE PROGRAM

FOR ANY INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT JHD@TNSE.COM









hockey for all centre



LIFT, JUMP, SPRINT FOR STRENGTH, POWER, SPEED

Information has never been easier to access. It is literally at our fingertips. While this can be beneficial, it can also lead to information overload, where there is so much to digest that it is hard to know where to start. As complicated as athletic training can seem, there are some foundational principles that yield the best results when followed.

Every program worth its salt will have an element of strength at its core, especially with younger athletes. Strength is the engine that makes power and speed possible. If you want to be more explosive, the first step is to learn how to produce more force (strength). From there, we can learn how to produce that force quicker (power and speed). To simplify your strength training in an effective manner, look to have a balance between body weight and loaded variations of the five basic movements: push, pull, squat, hinge, and core. Having a balanced representation of these movements over the course of each week will help build both relative and maximal strength while reducing the chance of injuries.

Some form of jumps are integral to every athlete's program. The type or style of jumps will change and should be appropriate to the training phase that the athlete is in, but it will always be there. Anything that is driven by an explosive hip extension can be classified under the jump category. Everything from Olympic lifts, medicine ball throws, box jumps, bodyweight jumps, loaded jumps, skips, hops, and plyometrics can be utilized in the appropriate context as far as intensity and volume to help athletes learn to produce force faster. Athletes that can produce force faster are more explosive in their sports, and the ability to be explosive is one of the most sought-after athletic attributes.

Not to be forgotten, if you want to be fast you need to practice moving fast. I know that sounds obvious, but it is often overlooked. In every phase of your programming, you should have opportunities to move fast. This can be agility drills, sprints done on your feet, sprints done using different equipment such as bikes, rowers, sleds or ski ergs, and even exercises performed with lighter loads that are on the speed/strength to speed side of the strength/speed continuum.

In this complex world of constant stimulus and information overload, keep it simple. Lift, jump, sprint.

Until next time, Strength, Courage, Hustle, Commitment



Photo by Jonathan Kozub

PARKER FORD OF THE MOOSE HAS WORKED HARD AT FOCUS FITNESS TO HAVE A BALANCE BETWEEN BODY WEIGHT AND LOADED VARIATIONS OF THE FIVE BASIC MOVEMENTS.



ADULT STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING

FOCUS FITNESS

Classes are led by a qualified trainer, classes are co-ed and tailored to all levels from seasoned gym veterans, to weekend warriors, to someone that wants to try something new to get into shape.

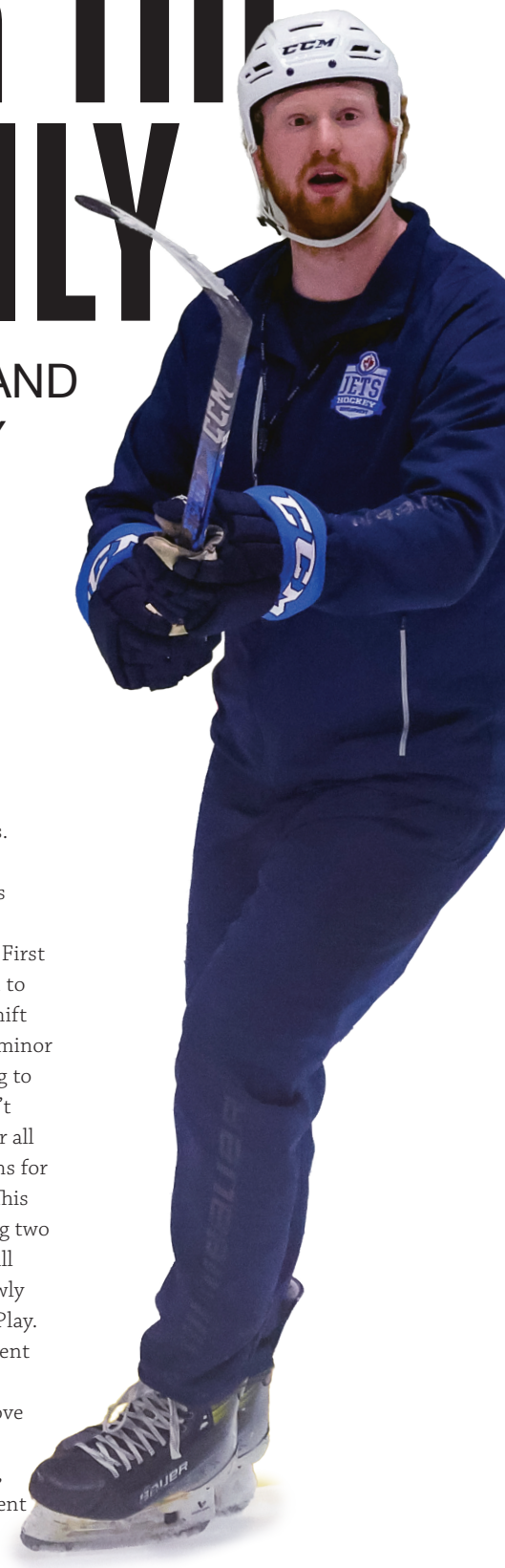
SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER AND FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR VISIT:

HOCKEYFORALLCENTRE.COM/OUR-FACILITY/FOCUS-FITNESS

HOCKEY FOR ALL CENTRE | 3969 PORTAGE AVENUE | AZEGLEN@TNSE.COM

HOCKEY FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

FROM BEGINNER SKATING TO ADULT AND YOUTH HOCKEY PROGRAMS, HOCKEY FOR ALL CENTRE HAS IT ALL



BY CHRISTINA KLYSH
Photos by Jonathan Kozub

Although Kody Gibbs is just celebrating his one-year anniversary of assistant coaching for Jets Hockey Development (JHD) at hockey for all centre, the progress he's seen in his players within the past year has been tremendous.

Since he finished his pro hockey career in the United States and started coaching last August, Gibbs has coached a variety of levels from U7 to junior hockey players – and even his former high school hockey team. However, one group that sticks out to Gibbs are his players from the First Shift program.

"It was really cool to see the progression of these kids from their first sessions when they were just learning to skate to their last session in how much they've improved," said Gibbs.

The First Shift program provides youth with equipment and equipment fitting demonstrations, sessions at manageable and consistent times, and ensures participants are having fun and feel safe while slowly introducing them to skills and rules of the game. First Shift is designed to make hockey accessible for families new to the sport and to engage more youth from underrepresented communities.

As most First Shift participants have never skated before, Gibbs tries to simplify lessons and makes sure participants are constantly moving and engaged in drills while encouraging them to grow their skills.

"I love to challenge players and push them to the next level," said Gibbs. "Don't be afraid to try new things. Your failure is going to lead to success."

Once players complete First Shift, the goal is for them to move on to the Second Shift program or transition to minor hockey. However, learning to skate and play hockey isn't just for kids, as hockey for all centre also offers programs for adults new to the sport. This fall, Gibbs will be coaching two adult programs: Adult Skill Development and the newly launched Adult Learn to Play. The Adult Skill Development program is designed for adults who want to improve their basic hockey skills, like skating, puck control, and breaking down different



positions on the ice, while Adult Learn to Play is targeted toward beginner skaters.

"We've seen a lot of growth with the numbers in our adult programming, whether it's adults who have already done programs with us and are wanting to learn more or how to play hockey, to adults who have never skated." said Gibbs. "It's fun to work with adults and see them pushing themselves to try a new skill."

Many of the adult participants come from families who already have children enrolled in a First Shift program, or who have kids in minor hockey.

"Once parents see how much fun their kids are having in hockey, it does peak their own interest in trying the sport. We want to encourage adults to take the chance, let them know there is programming for them, it's not intimidating and it's never too late to get involved in hockey."

For adults wanting to improve their skating skills, fall lessons offer the perfect time before the winter hockey season and outdoor rinks and rivers open up for skating. For youth, fall sessions offer a great head start in preparing for the upcoming minor hockey season.

"Improving your game in the fall will benefit players going into the season," said Gibbs, who's looking forward to coaching this fall's First Shift and adult programming. For him, the best part of coaching is seeing how the personal progress of a player translates to growing their love for the game.

"Whether it's over a season or a year that I'm coaching a player, it's really rewarding to connect with them and watch them improve and go to the next level, also taking their enjoyment for the sport to the next level."

For more information on First Shift and Adult programming this fall, visit hockeyforallcentre.com.

PROMO POWER PLAY







BY CHRISTINA KLYSH
Photos by Jonaathan Kozub

JETS FANS HAVE THE ADVANTAGE WITH NEW AND EXCITING PROMO GAMES FOR THE UPCOMING 2025-26 SEASON.

Jets fans have a lot to look forward to for the 2025-26 season with exciting entertainment on and off the ice. Along with new additions to the team and momentum coming off a historic season, fans can also add new theme games, giveaways, and community support and celebration nights to their calendars.

The season kicks off with the Home Opener presented by Canada Life (Oct. 9), when the Jets face the Dallas Stars fresh off their 2025 Second Round playoff matchup and unveil the banners representing last season's Presidents' Cup Trophy and Central Division Championship wins. Up next is the Opening Weekend Celebration game (Oct. 11) where the first 5,000 fans will receive a special commemorative Jets mini banner. The Presidents' Cup and Connor Hellebuyck's Vezina, Jennings and Hart trophies will also be at Canada Life Centre for the Oct. 9 and Oct. 11 games, giving fans a chance to take photos with the elite hardware.

Exciting new theme games have been added to this season's lineup. Fans can hit the hypothetical slopes (or stay cozy inside) at Après Ski Night (Jan. 9) to celebrate all things winter and grab a pair of Jets ski goggles as the game's limited giveaway. Dress up in your best plaid, grab your double-double and hang a Larry to Canada Life Centre for the Hoser Game (Mar. 14). Keeners (or the first 5,000 people through the door) will get their very own Jets trapper hat. The Halloween Game (Oct. 30) makes a spooky return, giving fans the opportunity to get creative, as will the St. Patrick's Day game (Mar. 17) where fans are encouraged to get decked out in green or their best leprechaun fits.

Winning won't just happen on the ice this year, as fans can look forward to several unique giveaways. The first 5,000 fans at 90s Night (Oct. 24) can throw it back to the Y2K era with a corduroy Jets snapback, or lasso a cowboy hat at Country Night (Mar. 7). There will be lots of presents under the tree at the Holiday Game (Dec.15) and a few lucky fans will win an autographed game-worn or game-issued jersey presented by the respective player at the Jerseys Off Our



Backs game (Mar. 26). Fan Appreciation night (Apr. 16) will be another prize-filled extravaganza to cap off the regular season.

Signature cultural heritage nights return this season, bringing fans together to celebrate the communities and cultures that make up our city. Ukrainian Heritage Night (Jan. 6) is back for its second year to celebrate Winnipeg's Ukrainian community with authentic cuisine, music, and entertainment. Filipino Heritage Night (Nov. 18), South Asian Heritage Night (Dec. 5), WASAC Night presented by Scotiabank (Jan. 24), and Black History Night (Mar. 3) will all bring exciting entertainment, unique concession items, and signature Heritage merchandise to fans' gameday experiences.

Continuing the Jets commitment to giving back to the community, many games this season are connected to raising awareness and support. The Jets will partner with local organizations for their Pride Game (Nov. 1) and Hockey Talks Night (Jan. 17) to share resources and raise funds. Fans can give back at the Hockey Fights Cancer game (Nov. 23) and throughout the Jets month-long campaign in support of CancerCare Manitoba Foundation, while Season Ticket Members can also donate their seats to military members and their families for Canadian Armed Forces Appreciation Night (Jan.13). The Celebrating Women in Sports game (Mar. 5) will again highlight local female athletes and women in the industry while opening doors for aspiring sports professionals with the return of the newly launched Celebrating Women in Sports scholarship.

Jets players will continue to support initiatives close to their hearts at games connected to a charitable cause. As initiative ambassador, Kyle Connor will advocate for those living with Parkinson's Disease at the Jets third annual Parkinson's Awareness Night (Apr. 11), which will raise money for U-Turn Parkinson's and the Movement Disorder Clinic. Jets captain Adam Lowry will again champion Child Advocacy Night (Oct. 18) as an ambassador for the Toba Centre for Children & Youth, an organization that supports children and families affected by child abuse.

The countdown to the Jets 15th anniversary season starts now! Single game tickets are on sale, along with build-your-own 4 or 6 game packs and full-season, half-season, and quarter-season memberships, giving fans even more options to cheer on the home team. Bring your squad to the game while saving big with group ticket offers or try out the Jets Passport, where fans can choose a pass within their preferred price range and seat locations in select upper and lower bowl sections for any pre-season and regular season games.

For tickets and the 2025-26 promo schedule, visit winnipegjets.com/promos.




GO #55 #81
JETS #37
GO!

CANADA
canada life
37


toba
DATE OCTOBER 10, 2024
TOBA CENTRE FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH
$50,000.00
FIFTY-THOUSAND
WE WELL CAMPAIGN




ticketmaster lounge
PERFETTI
91
COLE PERFETTI



MANITOBA MOOSE GOALTENDER DOMINIC DEVINCENTIIS IS WIRED FOR OVERCOMING ADVERSITY.



WIRED FOR THIS

A TRUE STUDENT OF THE GAME, MANITOBA MOOSE GOALTENDER DOMINIC DIVINCENTIIS' MAKEUP IS JUST RIGHT TO HANDLE ADVERSITY

BY FRANKIE BENVENUTI
Photos by Jonathan Kozub

Domenic DiVincentiis entered the world of professional hockey with the Manitoba Moose this past season, leaving behind a successful junior career in the intimate confines of North Bay, Ontario.

Through 117 career OHL games across three seasons, the Bolton, Ont. native backstopped the North Bay Battalion to 77 wins, boasted a .907 save percentage, and captured numerous honours, including OHL Goaltender of the Year and CHL Second All-Star Team nods in 2022-23. The success continued into the post-season as well, with North Bay reaching the Eastern Conference Final in three consecutive seasons, of which he played a combined 28 games.

For all of DiVincentiis' accomplishments and the praise heaped his way by a passionate North Bay community, the goaltender's final junior season wasn't what he hoped it would be. Throughout his struggles and amidst some disappointment, DiVincentiis held constant contact with Drew MacIntyre, developmental goaltending coach with the Moose.

"Goaltending is a humble position," MacIntyre explained. "You have to have some swagger and know that you're very good, because it's the only way you can succeed. You also have to have that balance of being humble because things can change so quickly."

MacIntyre stressed the importance of being able to hit the reset button mid-season. DiVincentiis was able to do just that, putting together a strong second half of his 2023-24 campaign and leading the Battalion to the playoffs once again. The late-season charge helped set him up for his first season in



the professional landscape.

DiVincentiis burst onto the AHL scene, stopping 37 of 39 shots to win his professional debut. He went on to post a .921 save percentage and 2.47 goals-against average over his first 10 AHL appearances.

The seventh-round draft choice in 2022 ended up splitting time between the Moose and their ECHL affiliate, the Norfolk Admirals. The netminder played 28 games with Manitoba and 22 in Norfolk between the regular and post-season. As a result, DiVincentiis' season was a bit back-and-forth, which was admittedly tough for the 21-year-old.

"It's a challenge," the young netminder detailed. "It's adversity, (but that's) how you get better. I use that extra bus ride as motivation for me to make sure that I'm prepared for that night. I thought that was a great opportunity for me to go down (to the ECHL) and learn, get myself better and push myself to get back up here to the AHL and prove that I'm ready for this spot here."

Despite some of those challenges, DiVincentiis' first professional campaign was a good one. He helped the Moose to 13 wins with a 2.84 goals-against average and .906 save percentage. DiVincentiis also played a pair of playoff games with Norfolk, earning a split. He feels those steps along the road help prove he's capable of playing at the AHL level, but the job isn't finished. DiVincentiis is arriving back in Winnipeg off the back of a summer's worth of work, which he hopes will help him be the best version of himself.

"I worked on everything. Every aspect was important," he said. "A big thing for me was my balance, making sure that I'm more forward on my toes, and having my hands out in proper positions, just being quicker. I wasn't complacent, I've had to work on something every single day and make sure that I had two or three things that I worked on every ice session."

DiVincentiis' pursuit of perfection will always leave him with something to work on. He hopes that drive will one day have him starring in the NHL. In that regard, the youngster has a perfect role model in Winnipeg Jets' superstar and Hart Trophy winner Connor Hellebuyck.

"It's pretty special to be able to say that I've been on the ice with Helle. You don't take that lightly," DiVincentiis explained. "To be on the ice with him, be able to take tips from him, and learn from him every day is pretty special to me. I'm gonna pick his brain a little bit. Learning from him is going to be a huge opportunity for me, and I'll take advantage of that."

Hoping to carve out the biggest role for himself at the highest level possible ahead of the 2025-26 season, DiVincentiis is prepared to tackle the next chapter with the same resilience that has brought him this far.

"There are only two goalies per team, and only one can play," he said. "All I can control is my day-to-day here. Work hard every day and get that one percent better each and every day for them to believe in me and continue sticking out."

Ticket memberships for the 2025-26 Manitoba Moose regular season are available now. With more options than ever before, it's exciting AHL hockey on your schedule. Choose from Full and Half Season memberships along with the 12 Game Pack, Flex 15 and Mini Plan. For more information on the benefits of becoming a ticket member, visit moosehockey.com/memberships.



2026 CAMPS + PROGRAMS

JETS HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT

Esso ICE LAB

FOCUS FITNESS

FOR ANY INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT JHD@TNSE.COM



hockey for all centre

A MILLION BUCKS A GOAL

BY CARTER BROOKS

Photos courtesy of James Carey Lauder, Cole Bradley and the Boston Bruins

For Strathclair's Morgan Geekie, playing hockey was never a question, it was always the answer. "I want to be a professional hockey player," was the response he'd relay when asked about his future plans back in grade school. That, and becoming a country music star, of course.

If the past seven years of his professional hockey playing career weren't enough of a fulfillment, the proof is most certainly in the pudding when looking back upon Geekie's 2024-25 season. Oh, and more importantly what happened this past June 29th.

After joining the Boston Bruins for the 2023-24 season, Geekie, now 27, signed a long-term contract to remain in Massachusetts through the 2030-31 season. Officially, it was a six-year deal worth $33 million – which just so happens to work out to be one million dollars for each goal he scored for Boston last season.

Yes, after potting 17 goals in his first year with the Bruins, the six-foot-3, 210-pound forward netted an eye-popping 33 markers last year, to go alongside 24 assists and 57 points – both career highs.

"I was never really in a position before to be able to negotiate a deal that long," Geekie told *Game On*. "The process went well – maybe felt a bit long at some points, as every negotiation goes. But there was obviously mutual interest from both sides, and security was a big thing. I love playing there and it's tons of fun. At the end of the day, it is a business, but I'm happy I'll be in Boston for six years. I'm super excited to be with the group we have and to be a part of that group moving forward. I'm just grateful and super excited for the opportunity and to see this group grow."

So, what changed from Year 1 in Boston to his goal-filled second season?

"I'm super happy with how last year ended," Geekie said. "From a personal standpoint, I think I grew a lot. I always knew that I could be a player that produced in this league. Every person that comes into the league believes that in themselves. And I think for me, just being given the opportunity around November/December, and just being allowed to play my game. I kind of played with the same two or three guys for the majority of the season after November. When you get that kind of chemistry it definitely helps with just your confidence and contributions. Playing here is probably the most I've learned in the NHL. It's not really a developmental league, but, you know, it was one of those things where every day I come in and I learned something new. It was definitely a huge year for me that I felt really good about, and I'm excited to go into next season."

But it wasn't always sunshine, rainbows and $33 million paydays for Geekie either. There was a point where he was a new face in the dressing room – his fifth new stall in five years. And that was just two seasons ago. As Geekie says, consistency certainly goes a long way.

"Being a young guy coming into the league, you're always trying to find some way to just re-establish yourself," he shared. "I got bounced around a couple of teams and some of the situations weren't the greatest. Maybe that's why I got kicked out of some places. But, I'm super thankful for




MORGAN GEEKIE MAKES HIMSELF
AT HOME ATOP THE WINNIPEG
JETS' GOAL MOUTH

the road that I took. I think that made me a lot better of a player and allowed me to add those different facets to my game. In Boston, I've had that consistency. Just being able to know I'd be in the lineup every night and being able to contribute and stuff like that was huge. Everything that I've experienced so far has all helped lead me to where I am and now and I'm super grateful."

Although hockey is his day-to-day, Geekie's pride and joy is back at home. His wife Emma – whom he grew up with back home in rural Manitoba – and daughter Gabby – who turned two years old this past April – are comfortably settled in their newly-built Calgary home, where the three recently hosted their extended family for his younger brother Noah's wedding.

Noah, who also played his AAA hockey with the Yellowhead Chiefs, is involved in the sporting world, but chose the baseball route. He currently serves as an academy coach with the U15 Okotoks Dawgs. Being situated near his younger brother has given the elder Geekie some family time, despite being over 1,000 kilometres from home.

But it's his other brother, Conor, who is currently turning heads down in Tampa Bay. Selected 11th overall by the former Arizona Coyotes, the now 21-year-old was dealt to the Lightning last year, where he went on to make his NHL debut and scored eight goals and 14 points in 52 games for the Bolts. According to Morgan, despite having earlier been in Conor's shoes, the best thing he can do is stay on the sidelines, allowing his younger brother to pave his own path.

"You know, I try to stay out of his hair as much as I can, especially when you get to this level," he laughed. "There's a lot of things that you need to figure out on your own to learn the kind of player you need to be. And that changes from team to team and even from season to season. It wasn't a matter of if, it was more a





MORGAN GEEKIE (RIGHT) WITH 'HOCKEY TONK' HOST COLE BRADLEY (CENTRE) AND SINGER/SONGWRITER MATT ROY (LEFT)

matter of when he would be an NHLer. I think you just see the maturity in his game and how much he's grown when it comes to playing a full 200-foot game. We honestly don't talk about hockey a whole bunch. I mean, we skate with each other when he's in town or when I'm in town during the summer. It's funny, but we don't really talk about hockey yet. Both of our lives revolve around hockey and it's pretty much all we do for a good portion of the year, so sometimes when we're together it's just best to talk about other things."

Rightly so.

Some of those other things that currently have Geekie's attention are that of his household chores, duties as a parent, oh, and did we mention country music? Much like that of his other childhood wish, Geekie actually had the opportunity last summer to appear on a Nashville-based music show, 'Hockey Tonk' where he teamed up with country music singer Matt Roy and collaborated on a song together, 'Back Home' based on his experiences in smalltown Manitoba.

Talk about dipping one's toes in every puddle provided!

"For me, I grew up with music," Geekie the guitarist said during the episode. "My parents and my brothers, we all have had it kind of in our life, engrained in us since we were super young. It was something super special, but I'm a little more comfortable on the ice."

Despite enjoying the bright lights of Nashville, Geekie's focus remains back home in Calgary with his family, before the group packs up and heads southeast to Boston as the first season of new contract kicks in.

"For me, the most important things these days are just understanding what actually matters," he reflected. "I mean, it's a lot easier to leave stuff at the rink now and get away from the game. Just being a good father to my daughter and a good husband to my wife. That's something I try to keep at the forefront. I'm at a point now in my career where I'm excited to continue to be a good player, but also, off the ice, just be there for my family and continue to have fun and grow. I think that's the best part. Being a dad is awesome. To me it's something that's a better job than being an NHL player.

"Sure, we all give our parents a lot of credit, but we don't truly understand the sacrifices that they make until you're faced with some of those same decisions. Not enough can be said about that. My parents' raising is something that I'll never take for granted; I just hope I can do half as good a job with my family as they did with me."



JUST A MAN AND HIS DEERE

DO YOU HAVE A HOCKEY TREASURE OR COLLECTION?



The Hockey Hall of Fame is the official caretaker of hockey's history – all leagues, all levels, worldwide!

Help us preserve the game together through your donation.

HOCKEY HALL of FAME
LE TEMPLE de la RENOMMÉE du HOCKEY

Please contact the Hockey Hall of Fame at acquisitions@hhof.com or 416-933-8224.

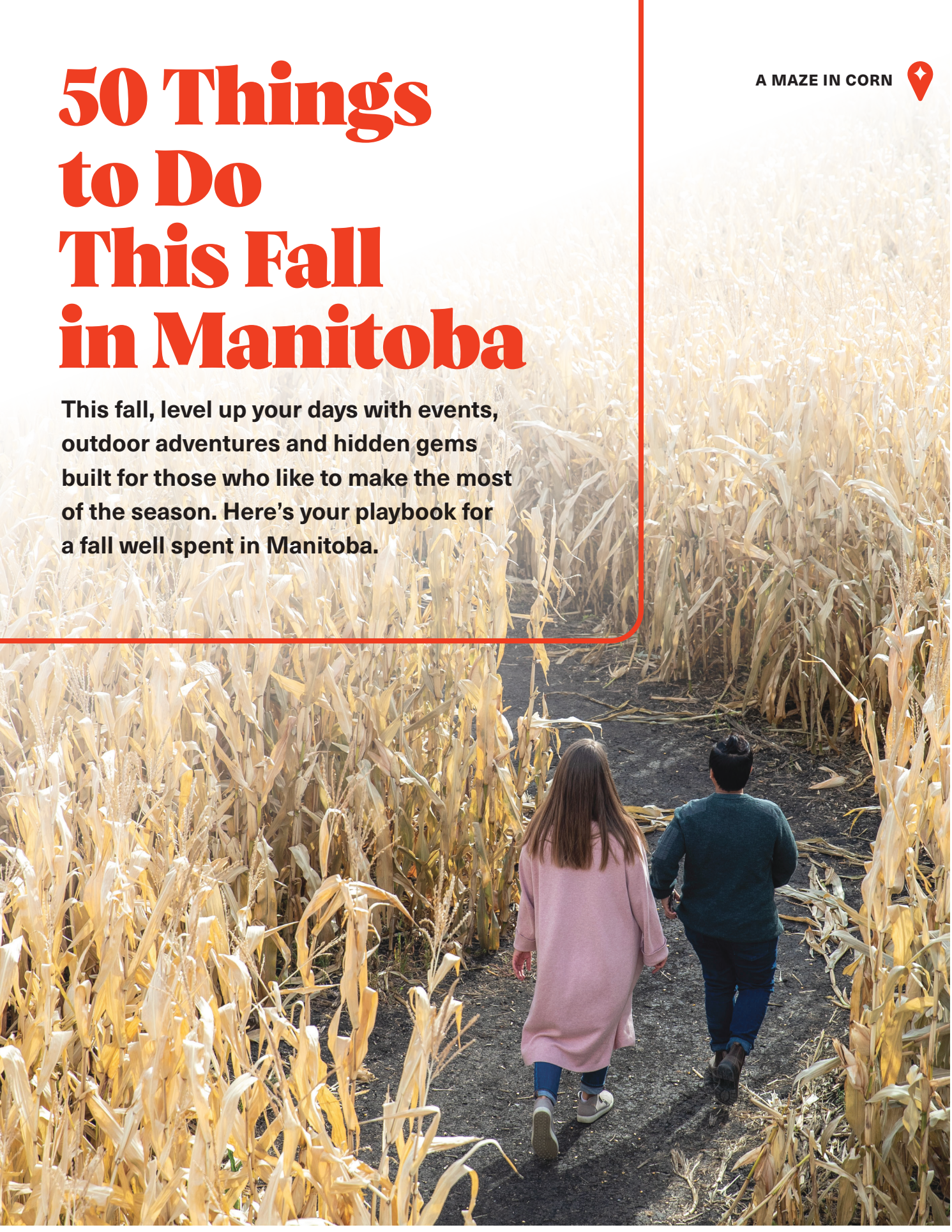
The Hockey Hall of Fame is an independent non-profit corporation and registered charity.


THERMEA | 49.83374° N, 97.13957° W
YOUR HEART.
RIGHT PLACE.
Discover trip ideas throughout this special supplement and find more ideas at travelmanitoba.com/YourHeartRightPlace.
MANITOBA

50 Things to Do This Fall in Manitoba

This fall, level up your days with events, outdoor adventures and hidden gems built for those who like to make the most of the season. Here's your playbook for a fall well spent in Manitoba.

A MAZE IN CORN













1 Fall feels and Halloween frights are in no short supply at **Six Pines Farm**. It's also home to the Ghostbusters Car and a petting zoo.

2 After a horseback ride through the boreal forest (and even the option to take a tour of the 'Falcon Lake Incident' UFO site), park your trusty steed and light a fire inside a cozy log cabin at **Falcon Beach Ranch** in Whiteshell Provincial Park.

3 Get a few last rounds of golf in before the season is through. Try courses like **Falcon Lake Golf Course**, **Gilbert Plains Country Club**, **Granite Hills Golf Club** and **Neepawa Golf and Country Club**.

4 Grab your binoculars, go birding at **Oak Hammock Marsh** and check out the newly renovated interpretive centre.

5 Catch the excitement as the **Winnipeg Blue Bombers** hit the turf at Princess Auto Stadium. This year's Grey Cup lands in Winnipeg, featuring the free **Wawanesa Street Festival** (November 13 to 15, 2025) with food vendors and entertainment.

6 Pick up a pumpkin, brave the haunted forest and meander through **A Maze in Corn**.







7 Fly high at **Hywire Zipline Adventures** where riders get a bird's eye view of the fall foliage of the Pembina Valley along with a plentiful jolt of adrenaline.

8 Just outside Winkler, **Dead Horse Cider Co.** offers indoor and outdoor taprooms with sweeping prairie views and flavourful local cider. Join the Apple to Cider Tour for a behind-the-scenes look at how each pour is crafted.

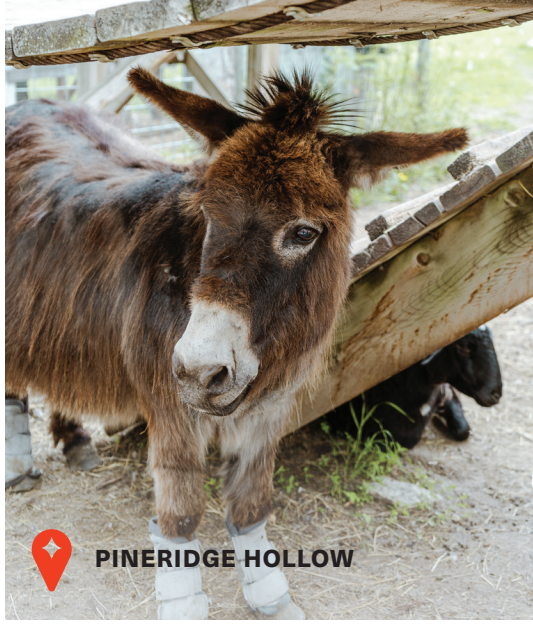
9 Grab your friends for a brewery crawl. **Travel Manitoba's Brew Pass** allows you to get discounts at top breweries and distilleries across the province.

10 Fun for the whole family is waiting at **Teulon Pumpkinfest**, happening September 20, 2025! Vendors, petting zoo, a dog show and of course, friendly competition for the biggest pumpkin.

11 Cast a line for greenbacks in **Hecla/Grindstone Provincial Park** with the help of a local guide. Outfitters like Kingsland Outfitting, Bruin Outfitting and Gaune Fishing know exactly where the action is.



BEAUSEJOUR FALL SUPPER



PINERIDGE HOLLOW



WHITESHELL PROVINCIAL PARK

PHOTO: INDIGENOUS TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

12 Head to **Whiteshell Provincial Park** for an in depth tour of the petroforms with Knowledge Keeper Diane Maytwayashing as she shares Indigenous stories and teachings.

13 Climb aboard the **Trolley of Terror** for a ghost tour through Winnipeg's haunted past. Get exclusive nighttime access to Dalnavert Museum and Seven Oaks House, plus hear eerie tales along the way.

14 Pop into **Assiniboine Forest** to experience this gem inside Winnipeg city limits. The aspen-oak forest creates a beautiful backdrop for resident mammals and birds.

15 **Manitoba AG EX** in Brandon (October 29 to November 1, 2025) celebrates the province's robust cattle industry with a show that's family-friendly and free! Learn about the life of a cow with MooMania, a hands-on experience that includes a mock cattle auction.

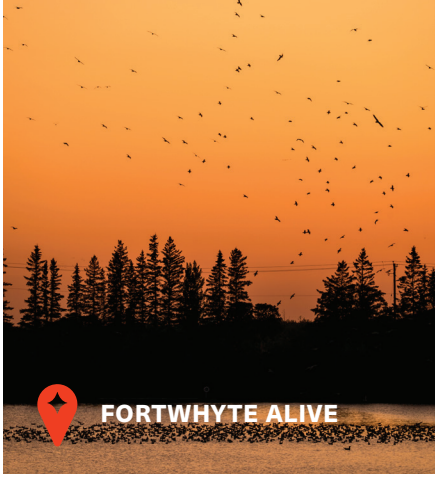
16 **Winnipeg Comiccon** returns October 24 to 26, 2025, bringing together fans of sci-fi, horror, anime, gaming, comic books and more. Explore a vibrant showcase of artists, creators and vendors from across the pop culture universe.

17 Don your stretchy pants and head to a small town for roast turkey, freshly baked pie and an extra helping of hospitality. **Get your guide to fall suppers** happening throughout the province:

18 The polar bear capital of the world welcomes visitors from far and wide to see these iconic predators in their natural habitats. Polar bear season is on in **Churchill** from mid-October to mid-November.

19 Shop, dine and spend some time exploring the forests around **Pineridge Hollow**. There's a fall festival, petting zoo, fresh baking and local shops.

TRAVELMANITOBA.COM







20 **Birds Hill Provincial Park** is your destination for a fall stroll and the Cedar Bog Trail is just the right length, flanked by trees dressed in autumn leaves.

21 The human hamster ball and bale pyramid slide are bonus activities at the **King Korn Maze**, where you can make your way through the corn maze or practice your swing at the golf range.

22 **The Hotel at Falcon Lake** boasts two on-site restaurants, an indoor pool and the swanky 1960s-inspired Sinatra's Lounge to refuel after your Whiteshell Provincial Park hikes.

23 Escape into an evening of botanical bliss at **The Leaf After Dark**, an adults-only event (October 8 and 22, November 5 and 26, 2025) with live music, wine, beer and charcuterie in The Leaf at Assiniboine Park.

24 As Winnipeg's only indoor kart track, **Speedworld** brings the thrill of the race to anyone willing to take on the challenge.

25 **Navigate Pinawa** offers glamping-style stays near the historic dam, combining cozy comforts like hot tubs and saunas with easy access to nature.

26 Gear up and head for **Hunt Lake Trail** near West Hawk Lake. You'll be treated to sweeping views of the lake and landscape on this five-hour fall hike.

27 Catch the **Manitoba Moose** at Canada Life Centre for fast-paced, affordable and family-friendly hockey. Out in Brandon, cheer on the Wheat Kings for a classic, high-energy night out with the hometown crowd.

28 Take off on a 20-minute float plane ride from Lac du Bonnet to **Eagle's Nest Lodge**, where stunning Winnipeg River views and a gourmet three-course meal await. Extend your adventure with autumn fishing and an overnight stay.

29 **FortWhyte Alive** hosts Sunset Goose Flights where diners watch the sky come to life as geese land after sunset over a three-course dinner.

30 The **Pinawa Heritage Suspension Bridge** is only one metre wide but 54 metres long, offering colourful scenery in this splendid season.

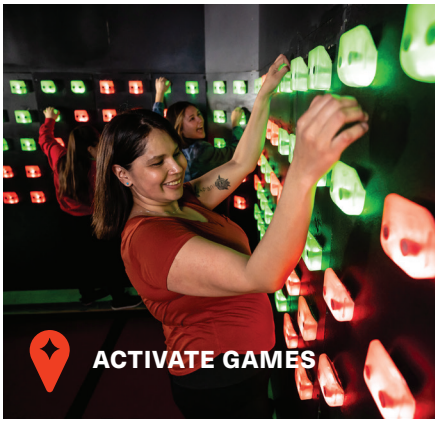
31 Step into the game at Winnipeg's top interactive venues. At Another World WPG, dive into immersive VR adventures, from haunted dance parties to post-apocalyptic missions. Or get moving at **Activate Games**, a gaming facility where you jump, climb and compete in real-time, tech-driven challenges.


RIDING MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK


BROKENHEAD WETLAND INTERPRETIVE TRAIL


PHOTO: LIZ TRAN

GIMLI


ACTIVATE GAMES

32 Black spruce, jackpines and tamaracks welcome hikers to **Riding Mountain National Park** where nearly 400 kilometres of trails are waiting.

33 The **Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame** celebrates the province's rich sports legacy, honouring icons like Ed "The Eagle" Belfour, Bobby Hull and Clara Hughes. Explore inspiring exhibits and historic artifacts with new features rotating regularly.

34 Visit **Gimli** and see commercial fishers unloading their catches during the fall season. Take a selfie with the Viking statue.

35 The **Brokenhead Wetland Interpretive Trail** near Scanterbury has a fully wheelchair accessible boardwalk and makes for a nature-packed scenic fall hike.

36 Book a cozy stay at a cabin in Winnipeg Beach, Belair or Lake of the Prairies with **Bowerbird Stays** where fun and adventure are always encouraged.







37 It's time to catch the last few live races of the season at **Assiniboia Downs**! Whether you're trackside or watching from the clubhouse or grandstand, enjoy the thrill of high-speed action.

38 Cheer on **Valour FC** as they wrap up their season this fall at Princess Auto Stadium. Catch all the action on a FIFA-standard turf pitch and enjoy eats from vendors throughout the stadium.

39 Witness the **Assiniboine Park Zoo** as it's transformed into a spooky, spell-tacular Halloween spectacle at Boo at the Zoo.

40 Dig into the fascinating history of aviation at the **Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada**.

41 The heart of **Schwabe Pumpkins** is a big barn that holds 37 varieties of squash—along with sweet corn, potatoes, gourds, baked goods, floral arrangements and an irresistible pumpkin spice syrup.

42 Hear the haunting stories of famous places in Winnipeg's Broadway neighbourhood on a **Ghost Tour with Square Peg Tours**.

43 **Heebie Jeebies** packs 20,000 square feet of terror with five chilling mazes. Enjoy unlimited maze re-entry, creepy photo ops, carnival games, bonfires, free hot chocolate and tasty eats from on-site food trucks.

44 Soak and relax at Elkhorn Resort's **Klar So Spa** after the last round of golf of the season at the Stanley Thompson-designed Clear Lake Golf Course.

45 Explore more of the north side of Whiteshell Provincial Park with a stay at **Pinewood Lodge**. Spend your days exploring nature and your evenings unwinding in the saltwater pool or the hot tub.











46 Head to **Witchy Wonderland** at the Red River Ex grounds in Winnipeg for family-friendly Halloween fun. Ride the scary-go-round, take a haunted hayride, grab a treat and explore spooky displays with eerie live performances.

47 Set sail for terror at the Marine Museum of Manitoba's **Halloween Haunt** in Selkirk. Explore real ships like the M.S. Lady Canadian and the S.S. Keenora.

48 Winnipeg's comedy scene delivers big laughs with two standout spots: **Rumor's Restaurant and Comedy Club** and **Yuk Yuk's**, set inside the Fort Garry Hotel's cozy club room. Catch top-tier comics and enjoy great food and drinks.

49 **Northgate Trails** will get your blood pumping, no matter what activity you choose. There are 26 kilometres of trails for mountain bikers, fat tire bikers, hikers and trail runners in the fall season.

50 Get in on some pre-season action as the **Winnipeg Jets** take to the ice.

Travel with your heart in the *right place.*





The best travel itineraries lead with the heart and so should you.

Explore travel options for whatever your heart needs at **travelmanitoba.com/YourHeartRightPlace**

MANITOBA
CANADA'S HEART IS CALLING

For up-to-date travel information, visit
travelmanitoba.com/trip-essentials/know-before-you-go

IG PRIVATE WEALTH MANAGEMENT

KAISER & ASSOCIATES



Elevate your game with the right partner.

We can help you build a tax-efficient retirement plan tailored to you and the life you want.

---

kevinkaiser.ca

Investors Group Financial Services Inc.

™ Trademarks, including IG Private Wealth Management, are owned by IGM Financial Inc. and licensed to subsidiary corporations.



RAYA HRANKOWSKI

2024-25 MWJHL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

ANTHONY MCLAUGHLIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

(Sponsored by PAL Distributors)

ANIKA MOROZ
EMILY VAN LEEUWEN
JAYNA VELHUIS
KATRINA JOHNSTON

DARCI INSTANCE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP MCKENNA

(Sponsored by the Darci Instance Foundation)

DESSYA MOSIENKO

MCKENNA RILEY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

(SPONSORED BY LISA, KEVIN AND BROOKE RILEY)

ERICA POUTEAU

KEENER ROOKIE OF THE YEAR SCHOLARSHIP

(Sponsored by Keener Jerseys)

MACKENZIE WADDELL

KIRK KUPPERS SCHOLARSHIP

(Sponsored by the MWJHL)

KALEIGH SOLINSKI

MWJHL SCHOLARSHIP

(Sponsored by the MWJHL)

LEAH POUTEAU

HRANKOWSKI, CHRISTENSEN, MWJHL'S MOST VALUABLE

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Scott Stroh and James Carey Lauder

The 2024-25 Manitoba Women's Junior Hockey League season finished superbly for Raya Hrankowski. Not only did the Silvertips high-scoring forward score the winning goal in the MWJHL championship series she was also named the playoffs' most valuable player.

"It was super exciting," said Hrankowski, a science student at the University of Winnipeg. "Celebrating with my teammates was so exciting. The adrenaline was rushing through my body. The last two minutes, working hard to tie the last game at the end, it just didn't feel real. It was my first time winning a championship and it was super exciting."

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.

And for Hrankowski it capped a remarkable season. A former star with the Winnipeg Avros, Hrankowski joined the MWJHL in 2022-23. In her third season as a member of the Silvertips, she had nine goals and 30 points in 26 regular season games and then, in the playoffs, she exploded for three goals and 11 points in nine playoff games. She scored a point in all but one playoff game and was named MVP.

If Hrankowski, 20, has the year she had in 2024-25 this coming season, there is no telling what she and the 'Tips could accomplish. However, she was only one of only eight major award winners in the MWJHL this season.

Let's meet the other seven young stars.

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER
KENADY CHRISTENSEN
PRAIRIE BLAZE

Kenady Christensen had an outstanding season with Prairie Blaze in 2024-25. The 21-year-old veteran had 17 goals and 23 points (seventh in league scoring) in 21 games and helped Prairie Blaze finish the season with a 16-7-2 record, good for third place in the MWJHL. In the playoffs, she had two goals and four points in eight games as Prairie Blaze reached the semifinals.

"Ken is someone who we can always rely on," said Prairie Blaze head coach Jamie Johnson. "She just loves to be at the rink and loves to be on the ice, and it shows in her game. She works hard every shift and puts it all out on the ice every time."

After a year with the RINK Hockey Academy in 2019, where she scored 16 goals and had 32 points in 24 games, Christensen moved on to the Interlake Lightning in the MFHL AAA U18. She had eight goals and 15 points in 32 games with Interlake and then jumped to Prairie Blaze in the MWJHL. She also won a gold medal with Indigenous Team Manitoba at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championship in Membertou, N.S.

"She's a goal scorer, but a playmaker too, a little bit of both," said Johnson. "She's just always solid with her teammates and makes sure she's setting up plays, but also we can rely on her to score some goals as well."



KENADY CHRISTENSEN

FORWARD OF THE YEAR

TAYLOR WUIRCH-COOMBS
WESTERN PREDATORS

Taylor Wuirch-Coombs has been named the MWJHL Forward of the Year for the third-straight time, a very impressive achievement and the only player in league history to win a major award three times.

Not surprisingly, Wuirch-Coombs, who played AAA U18 with the Avros, played her final MWJHL game last spring and will take over as the new head coach of the Western Predators this coming season.

Last season, the 23-year-old captain of the Preds was the MWJHL's third leading scorer with 14 goals and 26 points in all 24 of her team's games. She also completed her degree in English with a minor in Indigenous Studies at the University of Manitoba and will enter her first of education this fall.

"I just try to work hard on every shift," said Wuirch-Coombs, who spent the summer coaching the U15 Smitty's softball team. "I'm very competitive, so I always want to win and kind of do my best all the time."

POINTS LEADER

RAYLEY GOETZ
NORTHERN STARS

There are a lot of people around the MWJHL who believe that Rayley Goetz just could be the best player in the league. She certainly has a knack for scoring goals. A receptionist in a dental office by day and a full-time mom, she was also a 22-year-old over-ager in the MWJHL this past season.

It was her fourth year in the league, and she put up big numbers – 16 goals and 32 points in 24 games as she won the scoring title by five points over the Silvertips' Taylor Audette and helped the Northern Stars finish first in the MWJHL.

"Rayley came to us during COVID," said retiring Stars Coach David Stoesz last season. "The 2023-24 season was her breakout year. She's such a great athlete."

GOALTENDER OF THE YEAR

RYLYN LOEPPKY
NORTHERN STARS

Rylyn Loeppky is clearly the top goaltender in the MWJHL. In 13 games in 2024-25, she went 9-3-1 with a remarkable .944 save percentage and an even more impressive goals against average of 1.41. In three playoff games, she had a save percentage of .947 and a GAA of 1.35.

Loeppky, 22, played three seasons in the MFHL U18 AAA, one with the Interlake Lightning and two with Winnipeg Avros. She was also a member of Hockey Manitoba's U18 Female Program of Excellence.

She joined the Northern Stars for the 2021-22 season and just completed her fourth year in the MWJHL.

"Rylyn is a quality person, a fierce competitor, plays hard, trains hard and a great leader all around," said Stoesz, who has known Loeppky since she was just starting in the game. "She works on her craft as a goaltender and was a great mentor for our two other goaltenders. She's just an outstanding player and person."

DEFENSEMAN OF THE YEAR

KYLEIGH JOHNSON
MANITOBA BLIZZARD

There is not a person around the MWJHL who doesn't call Kyleigh Johnson, "an outstanding two-way defender."

Not only does she play well in her own end, but she is not afraid to be part of the offence. In 2024-25, she finished sixth in MWJHL



scoring with 11 goals and 24 points in 23 games.

The 20-year-old defender was a three-year star with the MFHL AAA U18 Winnipeg Avros where she had nine goals and 20 points in 47 games in her final season in 2021-22. She also played high school hockey at Oak Park and was a member of Hockey Manitoba's female U18 Program of Excellence.

MOST SPORTSMANLIKE PLAYER

ANNA BROWNRIDGE
NORTHERN STARS

The very highly regarded Anna Brownridge will be an assistant coach with the Stars this season, but last year she helped lead a team that finished first overall in the MWJHL with a tremendous second half performance after returning from a knee injury.

She had three goals and 10 points in 16 games and another three goals in seven playoff games.

Born and raised in Winnipeg Brownridge started playing hockey when she was six. She played high school hockey at Vincent Massey Collegiate and came to the MWJHL at the start of the 2022-23 season. She also played for Team Canada at the 2022 World Ball Hockey Championships.

"She's a leader," said Stoesz. "A knee injury was going to keep her out of the game last season, so we put her on the coaching roster. However, her knee improved to the point that she could play again, and she finished out the season on the ice. She was outstanding down the stretch. This year she will be an assistant coach, and I think she'll do really well. I believe she's got all the characteristics to be a really good coach."

MEDIA AWARD

BRIANNE GAGNÉ
MANITOBA GREY OWLS

According to Michael Gerl, who created the Media Award, "Gagne was presented with the award for her leadership as the captain of a really young team and guiding them how to play the right way. The results weren't always there but she handled everything with class and honesty as one of the most consistent players on the Grey Owls last season."

"She also answered the difficult questions with honesty and transparency," Gerl continued. "And was always tough on herself striving to be better every game."

She finished 13th in MWJHL scoring last season with eight goals and 19 points in 23 games.



BRIANNE GAGNÉ

ANNA BROWNRIDGE

GOLDEN EAGLES TAKE FLIGHT

The Manitoba Women's Junior Hockey League's popularity continues to grow and as a result, the league will expand in the upcoming 2025-26 season.

The Manitoba Golden Eagles will become the eighth team in the MWJHL joining Prairie Blaze, Northern Stars, Manitoba Blizzard, Polar Ice, Western Predators, Manitoba Gray Owls and the defending champion Silvertips.

The team is named after the Golden Eagle, which is present in Manitoba. While the population isn't large, there is a confirmed breeding ground in Wapusk National Park on Hudson's Bay.

"The team's jersey scheme will be along the lines of the Vegas Golden Knights," said league president Ashton Liskie. "The league and women's hockey is becoming so popular, with our registrations this year, I didn't think we're far away from expanding to nine teams.

The new team will be coached by Jeff Pott, who coached the Varsity Girls' team at Garden City Collegiate. Duane Barkley will be his assistant.

According to league executive Michael Gerl, the MWJHL will operate a 28-game regular season with an expanded post-season.

"The league begins play at the hockey for all centre in late September," said Gerl. "A full schedule can be found on www.themwjhl.ca in the coming weeks."

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by James Carey Lauder, Jeff Miller and courtesy of the Kelowna Rockets

WELCOME *the* MONARCHS

Out of the ashes of the Winnipeg Freeze comes the MJHL's newest team, the Winnipeg Monarchs



ZACH FRANKO, THE HEAD COACH AND GENERAL MANAGER OF THE MJHL'S WINNIPEG MONARCHS

ZACH FRANKO BELIEVES HE HAS TRAINED FOR THIS MOMENT.

A former member of the U15 AAA Winnipeg Monarchs, Franko played one season with the Winnipeg South Blues, spent five seasons in the Western Hockey League, four more with two Canadian universities, two seasons playing minor pro hockey in North America and then two more in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

Then, he went into coaching. He was a skills coach with the Portland Winterhawks U18 AAA squad, became an amateur scout with the Manitoba Moose, became head coach and GM with the MMJHL's St. Boniface Riels and then took a job as an assistant coach with the WHL's Swift Current Broncos.

Now, the 32-year-old Winnipegger is the new head coach and general manager of the latest (current) entry in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League – the Winnipeg Monarchs.

"It's been a pretty cool stepping stone from playing to being behind the bench," said Franko, who will take over the day-to-day operations of a franchise that has had a tough go the past few seasons. "It's been a bit of a whirlwind over the last few years, that's for sure.

"When I finished playing, I was in Portland working with the Winterhawks in their front office and I was also helping with the junior Hawks in a coaching/directing side. Then got engaged and moved back to Winnipeg. I was running a business and stepped back from hockey full-time. I was coaching the MMJHL's St. Boniface Riels and did that for two years and then on an August day, Taras McEwen (WHL's Swift Current Broncos) called me and said, 'Hey, we need an assistant to come in and run the power play and oversee the forwards and do our skill development. How would you feel about doing that?' I said that would be great and I had the opportunity to go back to the Western League.

"Then, I got the offer from the Monarchs to continue to grow my career as a head coach and GM, and that was kind of a no-brainer to come home and join an organization that's trying to do things the right way and get back up to becoming a competitive franchise in the MJHL."

The brand-new Winnipeg Monarchs were actually the old, tired Winnipeg Freeze. The Freeze joined the MJHL in 2020, the COVID year and played only five games. Good thing too, they didn't win a game.

In 2021-22, the Freeze went 10-40-0-4. In 2022-23, they went 4-51-0-3. In 2023-24, they were 8-45-0-5. Last year, they went 6-49-1-2. It's been a struggle.

That's why it's the perfect time to wipe the slate clean and start anew.

"I'm pretty well coming into a new team," Franko said. "We have a new brand and new owners and it's a new team and a new re-brand. It's an exciting time. To me, that was a big reason why I came back. It's a fresh start. There is a lot of support within the company that owns the team now and it allows me to grow my career as a head coach in a very reputable junior league and be a general manager, as well. That's something I couldn't pass up."



To be honest, you could ask Franko why he'd leave a Western Hockey League job with a bright future to take over a team that has won 28 games in four seasons. For Franko, the answer is simple. It was an easy decision.

"Sure, it was hard to leave the Western League," he said. "That league has been good to me as a player and as a coach and I thought long and hard about taking this job. After some long conversations with the GM in Swift Current, Chad Leslie, he finally told me, 'This is a great opportunity for you to go and spread your wings as a head coach and get management experience.' He was right. To be able to broaden my resume at a young age was crucial to me.

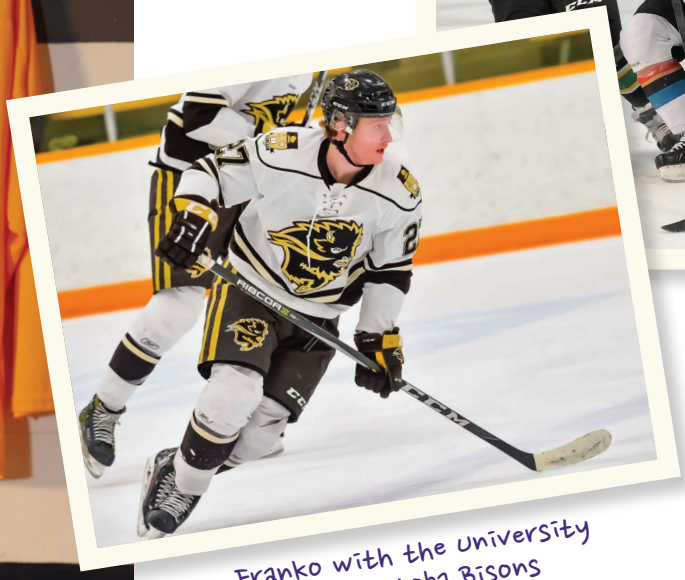
"Plus, being from Winnipeg, my wife is from Winnipeg, I'm from Winnipeg, I have a lot of resources here and so, going into a junior management position, you have to maximize your resources. I automatically have more help here than I would in another city, so I'm going to use the resources I have to get this thing to where it needs to go."

Franko added that it was tougher for him to retire as a player than it was to jump at the opportunity





Franko with the Kelowna Rockets



Franko with the University of Manitoba Bisons



to be head coach and GM with the Monarchs.

"I was playing in Europe when I retired and I loved playing in Europe," he said bluntly. "It was awesome. I would still be playing there if it wasn't for COVID and a couple of hip injuries that spooked me a bit at the end of my career. But I loved playing over there. Slovakia, Romania and Hungary were great places to play, and I was very grateful for my time. I was lucky enough to play in good spots."

It's interesting to note that he already has some management experience and not just with a couple of hockey teams. He took a summer to try something new and learned a lot.

"I managed the Lorette Golf Course," he explained. "It was different. It was a big change in my life. Especially after you've just played a sport where your life has revolved around the winter months and you want to maximize your summer. We have a cabin, and I like to go out there but that was tough when you're at the golf course every single day.

"But that was a good experience for me. It's a very people-oriented job and you have to manage everything – the books, the facility, the people. It wasn't hockey but it taught me a lot about managing people, both employees and the clients who spend money at your golf course."

So far, his time with the Monarchs has been rewarding.

"The owners have been tremendous," he said. "It's been, 'Let's make this team competitive, let's get this team to where it needs to go and let me know if you need anything.' I have the authority and responsibility to build this team. If there are any business things that need to be done, they said, they'd take care of it. The hockey side is up to me."

As bad as the Freeze has been, the new Monarchs will give a young coach and GM an outstanding opportunity. He gets to prove to himself and the hockey world that he can build a franchise. It's an ideal situation.

It's also a complete trip around the hockey world. Franko has now gone from being a 14-year-old player with the Winnipeg Monarchs to a 32-year-old coach and GM.

"That's right, I was a Monarch and it's crazy how things have come full circle," he said. "I grew up in South Winnipeg and played for the Twins when I was young, then to the Monarchs, then to the Wild and played one year for the Blues then I went to Kelowna.

"I had a good career and was fortunate to be coached by some very influential coaches who are now at the highest level in the NHL. They put their trust in me to produce at a young age, and I still talk to some of those guys today. I want to make sure that the owners who have put their trust in me, get the absolute best I can offer."



OFF TO A BIGGER HOCKEY LIFE

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Darryl Gershman

For head coach Ashley van Aggelen, being a member of the Winnipeg Avros means more than winning hockey games.

"We love to win, we try to play every game to win," said van Aggelen, the only coach the Avros have ever had. "But there is a lot more to what we do than winning hockey games. We want to focus on the rounded athlete, on making a better human.

"My main philosophy is, it doesn't matter if you love me, hate me, whatever, I'm here to make you a better hockey player and also a better human. So, with our program, we focus on the human side of a hockey player. I feel that if you can develop



THE WINNIPEG AVROS 2025-26 UNIVERSITY COMMITS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, SYDNEY HAGGART, CARLIN ZANT, RIO PIERRE, ELLA SPEECHLEY, EVY WEST, AVERY SHORTRIDGE, LIBERTY AIME, SELENE WOZNEY AND MADDIE SYLVESTRE

the skills and characteristics to become a better human, then it will naturally make you a better hockey player. If you're trustworthy, if you can communicate, if you can show that you can be on time and hold yourself accountable, if you can take criticism, if you want to learn, all of those things, then it will make you a better hockey player. We focus on the whole person."

It obviously works. The Avros have long had a reputation for turning out university-ready hockey players. For instance, this past season Camryn Gillis, an Avros grad and fifth-year University of Manitoba Bisons player, won a teammate award and wore an A for her university team while Isabela Huculak, a 2023-24 MFHL U18 AAA All-Star just completed a very successful freshman season at York University.

Next year, nine Avros players will take the next step – eight to universities and colleges and one to the Ontario U22 league where she will prepare for her freshman season at an NCAA D-1 school in 2026-27.

There is little doubt all nine will be ready to play at a high level.

"When we meet with our kids at the beginning of the year, we let them know that we're going to treat our program as if it were a shadow of the university program," van Aggelen said. "We want our kids to understand time management, commitment and what it takes to get to the next level so when they get to the next level, it's not a shock to their system.

"So, in terms of our off-ice training, our practices, how often we're travelling, we want all of that to mirror a university program. We actually played 70 games last year which is double a university schedule. Our double overtime loss in the final game of the league championship series was our 70th game. We're closer to an NHL schedule than we are a university schedule."

"So, with a program designed like a university program and with a focus on the whole rounded athlete we have a philosophy that seems to be working. A lot of our girls are going into university and they're becoming leaders on their university teams, doing awesome things at the universities or colleges they attend. And if they don't go on to play university hockey, many of them are playing in the junior league and they're getting great marks at the U of W or U of M or Red River. The important point is, all of them are ready for the next step in their hockey journeys."

With assessments by Coach van Aggelen, let's meet the Winnipeg Avros' 2025-26 college commits ...



MADDIE SYLVESTRE

G MADDIE SYLVESTRE

JAMESTOWN UNIVERSITY
ACHA D-1

"Maddie is a third-year goalie with the Avros," said Coach van Aggelen. "She dedicates extra time outside of the Avros program to focus on goalie specific training, always seeking ways to better herself. She's good for our room; she is a supportive teammate and brings character. Her drive in the crease is evident as she fights for every puck that comes her way."

D AVERY SHORTRIDGE

YORK UNIVERSITY
USPORTS

"Shorty is a third year D who brings a different level of compete to the ice," Said van Aggelen. "If there's one guarantee, it's Shorty is always going to give you everything she has. She's a physical presence that rarely gets beat in tight area battles. Her blue line play created a lot of offense for the Avros this year. Shorty leads by example every time our team is together, but she is also great mentor within the minor hockey community as well."

D EVY WEST

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
USPORTS

"Evy is a third year D and one of the most mobile D I have ever coached," said the coach. "Her foot/edge work allows her to escape pressure and get up the ice quickly. Evy is an offensive defenseman who can lead the rush but was also relied upon in every situation for the Avros. Her leadership over the past two seasons was a huge factor in the team's success this year."

D CARLIN ZANT

MINOT STATE UNIVERSITY
ACHA D-2

"Carlin is a second year D on our team, third in the league," said van Aggelen. "She is an aggressive player who continuously outworks her opponents. She does whatever she possibly can to protect her crease while also crashing the net at the other end when opportunity presents itself. She has a strong hockey IQ but remains a student of the game who is always willing to learn and ask questions."



AVERY SHORTRIDGE

EVY WEST

CARLIN ZANT

F ELLA SPEECHLEY
UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR USPORTS

"Ella is a third year forward for the Avros," said Coach van Aggelen. "She never takes a shift off and is relentless. She's relied upon heavily on our special teams and is a force in the circle. She plays with an edge, making it hard for others to play against her. She has a nose for the net and isn't scared to go to the tough areas of the ice. Ella leads: she gains the respect of those around her on sheer work ethic alone."

F RIO PIERRE
ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY NCAA D-1

"One of the most talented players with the puck making her a threat in all areas of the offensive zone," said van Aggelen. "She has a release that I've never seen at the AAA level. Her natural puck ability sets her above others. Her age and her record-breaking season both with the Avros and the MFHL supports that. She earned the Avros and the league's leading scorer as well as being named both the Avros and the MFHLs Most Valuable Player. Outside of her talent, in my 20 years of coaching I have never worked with a player who studies more video than Rio does."

F SELENE WOZNEY
NIPISSING UNIVERSITY USPORTS

"Selene is a second year forward for the Avros, third year forward in the league," said the coach. "Woz is known for her shiftiness across the blue line. She is a natural with the puck which allows her to be creative off the rush or half wall. If you've ever come to a game, you would see Woz entering the zone on her edges with her head up looking to make a positive play."

F LIBERTY AIME
NIPISSING UNIVERSITY USPORTS

"Lib is a second year forward for the Avros, third year forward in the league," said van Aggelen. "Lib's biggest asset is her 200-foot game. She goes just as hard on the forecheck as she does on the back check making her a well-rounded player. She also has no problem sacrificing her body for the success of the team putting her at the top of the Avros list for shot blocks. Lib is also a player that coaches love having on their team because she's ok and comfortable playing any position. She's played in the middle, on her strong side and on her off hand."

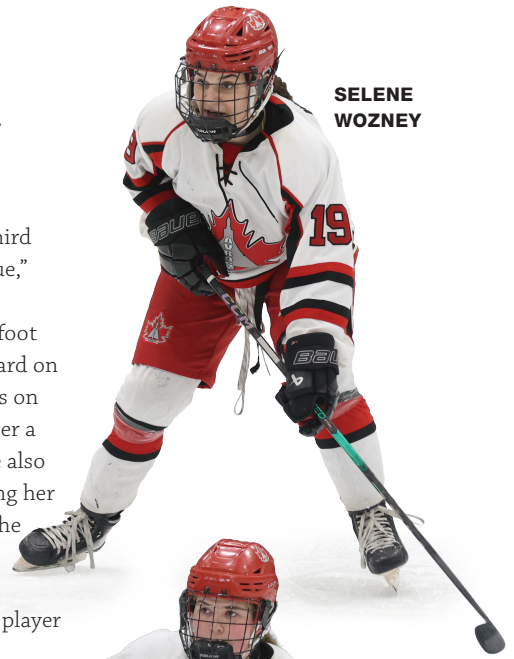
F SYDNEY HAGGART
ADRIAN UNIVERSITY NCAA D-3

"Syd is a second year forward for the Avros," van Aggelen said. "She brings a positive attitude to the rink every day and is an incredible teammate. Syd will always give you everything she has and is the first to ask questions and analyze her play in-game. She's hard on both sides of the puck adding extra pressure when we need it the most."



ELLA SPEECHLEY

RIO PIERRE



SELENE WOZNEY



LIBERTY AIME



SYDNEY HAGGART

GOALIE LISKE IS CRJHL'S MOST VALUABLE





BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Rayme Thompson
and Duncan Hasker

It was a season to remember for Beausejour Comets goaltender Dylan Liske.

Not only did Liske beat out Lundar's Kennedy Kerr and La Broquerie's Jaxon Loewen to be named the Capital Region Junior Jockey League's Goaltender of the Year, but he also received more votes than St. Malo's Teagan Fillion and Arborg's Brandon Burak and was named the CRJHL's Most Valuable Player.

Liske's regular season numbers were eye-popping. In 17 games, Liske had a 13-2-2 record with three shutouts, a 2.10 goals against average and a .934 save percentage. In 15 playoff games, Liske went 10-4-0 with a 1.97 goals against average and .937 save percentage.

It was an incredible season.

"Obviously, he was one of the best goalies in the league, one of the best players in the league," said Comets head coach Troy Kennedy. "He went out and competed

hard and he gave it his best each and every night.

He played every game for us in the playoffs and took us right to Game 7 of the finals. Fortunately, we couldn't score for him. he had a great season."

Liske was clearly the star of the 2024-25 CRJHL season, but he wasn't the only player honored by the league. Colton Magne of the league champion St. Malo Warriors was named the league's Top Defenceman, Brandon Burak of the Arborg Ice Dawgs was named the CRJHL's Rookie of the Year and Nikolas Bear of the Beausejour Comets and Jeremie Collette of the St. Malo Warriors were named co-winners of the Most Sportsmanlike Award.

Let's meet each one of the CRJHL's Award Winners with comments from their coaches:

MVP & TOP GOALTENDER

DYLAN LISKE / BEAUSEJOUR

"Dylan obviously was one of the leaders on our team," said Kennedy. "He came back from the MMJHL and competed in his hometown and just liked what we had going on here.

"From the day he started here, he was a leader in the dressing room and off the ice, as well. The guys all looked up to him. He's just a great, great teammate. He really presented himself well and really helped pick up the guys when they were down. He would be the one speaking out and building everybody up and you just can't have enough of those kinds of guys."

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

BRANDON BURAK / ARBORG

"Brandon is an exceptional hockey player," said Derric Gulay, who coached the Ice Dawgs in 2024-25 but decided not to return this coming season. "As the season progressed, it was quite evident that Brandon was going to be a core leader. He finished the regular season with the Most Valuable Player Award, and was the scoring leader and Rookie of the Year for our organization. His play is something that Brandon and the organization should be should be very proud of.

"I think that winning the Rookie of the Year Award speaks volumes about his season, as well as his overall development as a person. It was a pleasure to coach Brandon and just see the excitement that he has for the game and the commitment and the friendships that he developed. I would say that, from my perspective, he has the ability to play at higher level, and I'm excited to see where his skills take him."

TOP DEFENCEMAN

COLTON MAGNE / ST. MALO

"He's a St. Malo boy, born and raised, and all four of his brothers played for me. Colton is the last one of the five boys in the family. That's pretty cool," said St. Malo head coach Ralph Collette. "During the summer, he works in Northern Manitoba fighting forest fires.

"He's a very good player. He's not a big guy, but he's a very smart offensive defenceman. He's a very natural defenceman. He's good at gap control and sees the ice very well. The great news is, he's back next season."

CO-MOST SPORTSMANLIKE PLAYER

NIKOLAS BEAR / BEAUSEJOUR

"Mr. Bear has been here for a couple of years and last year, he got nominated for this award," Kennedy said. "He's a quieter guy, a quiet leader. He wants to lead on the ice. He's a very skilled player.

"He doesn't take a lot of penalties, but that doesn't mean he's not really competitive. He does get in there, and he's very good at taking pucks away and seeing the ice. He's one of those guys that you love to have on your team. He's been one of our top scorers both years he's been with us, and obviously he's very important to our team. He drives out from the city and is here for every practice. He's just a great kid."



DYLAN LISKE



BRANDON BURAK

CO-MOST SPORTSMANLIKE PLAYER

JEREMIE COLLETTE / ST. MALO

"Jeremie is a quiet leader," Coach Collette said of his son, who aged out of the CRJHL this season. "He's a tough hockey player in the corners but he doesn't take a lot of penalties. Tough, but not dirty. He complemented Ashton (Dubois) and Brady (Gregoire) very well. Jeremie is the set-up guy for those two guys.

"He's also the type of player you want on the ice for the final minute of a game. He's a great player on the power play, but he's such a good defensive forward, you want him on the ice in the dying seconds of a game to preserve a lead. He's just a very smart player."



JEREMIE COLLETTE

THE 2024-25 CRJHL ALL-STARS

ARBORG ICE DAWGS

Tyson Barylski - 19GP | 13G | 14A | 27PTS

Brandon Burak - 25GP | 24 | 13 | 37 PTS

BEAUSEJOUR COMETS

Jace Ticknor - 18GP | 2G | 11A | 13 PTS

Clint Thomas - 20GP | 18G | 12A | 30PTS

LA BROQUERIE HABS

Mario Gagnon - 21 GP | 7G | 11A | 18PTS

Calem Normandeau - 20GP | 4G | 10A | 14PTS

LUNDAR FALCONS

Braeden Lukas - 24GP | 11G | 8A | 19PTS

Troy Johannesson - 22GP | 3G | 8A | 11PTS

NORTH WINNIPEG SATELITES

Emerson Veloso - 19GP | 11G | 11A | 22PTS

Bryce Raven - 20GP | 3G | 9A | 12PTS

SELKIRK FISHERMEN

Logan Saluk - 23GP | 18G | 17A | 35PTS

Ryland Schroeder - 21GP | 6G | 8A | 14PTS

ST. MALO WARRIORS

Teagan Fillion - 24GP | 25G | 26A | 51PTS

Colton Magne - 24GP | 4G | 28A | 32PTS

THE GOALTENDERS

Dylan Liske ; Beausejour Comets - 13GP | 9W | 2L | 2OTL | 2SO | 2.12 GAA | .932SV%

Jozse Gauthier-Urmos ; St. Malo Warriors - 13GP | 11W | 2L | 1SO | 1.90 GAA | .931SV%

COLTON MAGNE





NIKOLAS BEAR

BY JOHNSTON HALL

Photos by Kelly Jacobson and courtesy of the Peguis Juniors

THE BEST OF THE NORTHERN GAME



They may not have been award winners during the 2024-25 Keystone Junior Hockey League season, but they were definitely among the league's best and brightest.

Xzavier Kubluitok of the league champion OCN Storm, Madexx Long of the regular-season champion NCN Flames, Wilfred McLeod of the Cross Lake Islanders, KJHL alumni Matty Cameron of the Peguis Juniors and Brannigan Ferland of the Norway House North Stars are shining examples of the star power that leads the KJHL.

Let's get close up and personal with five of the KJHL's best:

XZAVIER KUBLUITOK, OCN STORM

XZAVIER KUBLUITOK, OCN STORM

After a tremendous 2024-25 season, capped off by a run to the Keystone Junior Hockey League and Manitoba Provincial Jr. B championship, Kubluitok will attend Lake Region State College - a member of ACHA Division 1.

The 6-foot, 175-pounder from Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, was one of the top D-men in the KJHL last season. He spent a year at Pilot Mound Hockey Academy where he played for the U17 team and then moved to Ontario for a year before returning to play the 2023-24 season with PBCN Selects.

He joined the Storm for the 2024-25 campaign and had a goal and seven pints in 16 regular season games, then had a goal and three points in 10 playoff games as he anchored the defence that led OCN to the 2024-25 league championship.



WILFRED MCLEOD,
CROSS LAKE ISLANDERS

WILFRED MCLEOD,
CROSS LAKE ISLANDERS

The brilliantly skilled offensive centre, Wilfred McLeod has left his mark on the KJHL. During the 2024-25 season, McLeod scored his 159th career goal, moving past former Peguis Juniors star Tyrome Spence and into top spot on the league's all-time goal scoring list.

"I was about three or four when first tried skating here in Cross Lake," he recalled. "I played all my hockey in Cross Lake. When I was six or seven, my grandpa built a skating rink for me and that's where I developed most of my skills. I played minor hockey in Cross Lake up until U18 and that's when I went to Notre Dame. I had played Jr. B with the Islanders the year before I went to Notre Dame and it was the first time I had a chance to play outside Cross Lake."

His time at Notre Dame was an eye-opening experience but it also gave him many of the skills that has made him the greatest goal scorer in KJHL history.



MADDEX LONG,
NCN FLAMES

MADDEX LONG,
NCN FLAMES

The 5-foot-9, 170-pounder from Thompson had a superb season in 2024-25. He finished third in league scoring with 38 goals and 62 points in just 25 games. Long grew up in Thompson and played all his minor hockey there until he joined the U15 AAA Norman Wolves in 2018.

"After playing for the Norman Wolves, I made the U18 AAA North Stars in 2020," he said. "I started there when I was 16, but it was the COVID year, so I only played two games. I played the next two years with the Northstars and then joined NCN for the 2023-24 season when I was 17 and going to school in Winnipeg."

Long has 47 goals in 38 KJHL games and is expected to be one of the league leaders again this season.



MATTY CAMERON,
PEGUIS JUNIORS

MATTY CAMERON,
PEGUIS JUNIORS

Matthew (Matty) Cameron played most of his Minor Hockey in Peguis, he played for the Interlake Lighting U17AAA at the age of 15, then played for the Peguis Juniors at 16 and wound up scoring 67 goals and 138 points in 72 career games. He had short stints with the MJHL's OCN Blizzard and the SJHL's Melville Millionaires, the PJHL's Ochapowace Thunder and the NEAJHL's Saddle Lake Warriors before returning to the Juniors in 2015-16, scoring 26 goals and 62 points in just 20 games.

Matty went on to play one season with the London Lakers of the Greater Metro Hockey League scoring 27 goals and 73 points in 32 games.

Cameron continues to play hockey, almost exclusively in Indigenous Hockey Tournaments with the Peguis Mohawks and continues to be a big part of the Peguis community.

BRANNIGAN FERLAND,
NORWAY HOUSE NORTH STARS

The 2023-24 KJHL Most Sportsmanlike Player had another terrific season last year. He was in the Top 10 in scoring with 23 goals and 54 points in just 32 games and led the North Stars in goals and points.

Originally from Brandon, this 19-year-old offensive powerhouse started his KJHL stint with the Waywayseecappo Wild in 2023, but after six games in Wayway he moved to Norway House and has scored 42 goals in 62 league games over the past two seasons.

Ferland was a star at Vincent Massey in Brandon where he led the Vikings in scoring over three seasons with 41 goals and 104 points in 80 games. In his second and final year with the Vikings, he had 33 goals and 74 points in just 34 high school games.



BRANNIGAN FERLAND,
NORWAY HOUSE NORTH STARS



DREW PETERS, OCN STORM, MVP AND LEADING SCORER

PETERS A NO DOUBT MVP

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Kelly Jacobson

WHILE THE **OCN STORM** CAME OUT OF NOWHERE TO WIN THE 2024-25 KEYSTONE JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP, THERE WERE FOUR PLAYERS AND A COACH WHO OUTSHONE EVERYONE IN THE NORTH.

It's hard to imagine anyone having a better season than Drew Peters. The 20-year-old from Winkler, who just finished his third season with the OCN Storm of the Keystone Junior B Hockey League scored 40 goals and dished out 40 assists in just 33 regular season games and was named the 2025 Most Valuable Player in the KJHL.

Things got even better in the playoffs as Peters a member of Long Plain First Nation, had 12 goals and 26 points in 11 playoff games and led his underdog Storm to the KJHL and Provincial Jr. B championship.

"We were so happy to get him back this season," said Storm head coach Ethan Constant. "He started the year trying out for Wayway (the Waywayseecappo Wolverines of the Manitoba Junior A Hockey League) and we thought he was going to make it there. He has so much speed and he's such a smart player, I've always felt he should be in Jr. A.

"He's also dedicated to the game, and I know he's put in a lot of work and I know he wanted to make Jr. A last season. Fortunately for us, I guess, he got cut right at the last second in Wayway and we told him we were very happy to have him back. He's an outstanding hockey player."

This past season, Peters was the KJHL's leading scorer, played in the 2024-25 KJHL All-Star Game and was the league's Forward of the Month for December. In May, he told Game On Magazine that he had accepted a scholarship to play hockey at Niagara University.

The 6-foot-1, 180-pound Peters played the 2021-22 season with the Blizzard and made Indigenous Team Manitoba in 2022. He played at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships in Membertou, N.S., and had a tremendous tournament. Cut by the Blizzard in 2022, he's had three superb seasons with the Storm. In 2023-24 he had an eye-popping 61 goals and 107 points in just 30 games. He has won the last two KJHL scoring titles and in 2023-24 was the runner-up to Lyle Murdock of Peguis in the MVP voting.

Besides Peters, there were four other major award winners in the KJHL this past season as well as three awards that were handed out to officials: Nic Rusak was named official of the year, Nick Szabunio was named most dedicated officials while Brad Fox was named most promising official.

Let's meet the best and brightest in the KJHL this past season:

LEADING SCORER AND MVP

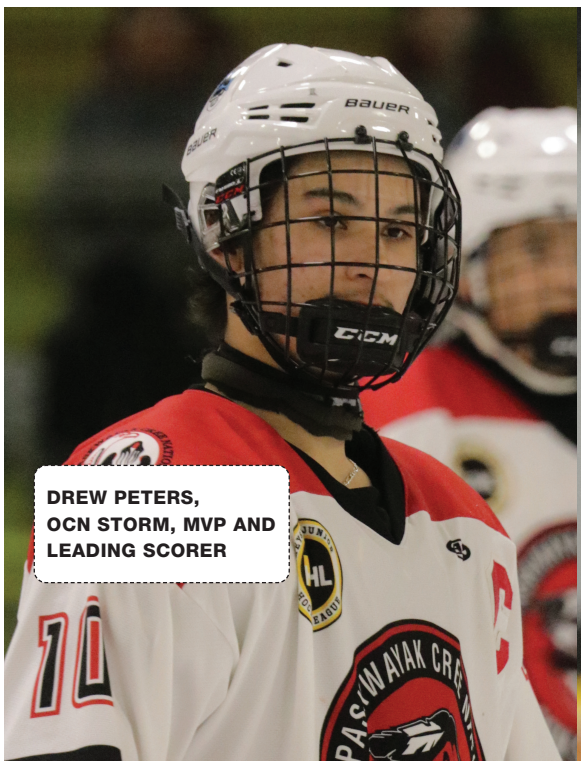
DREW PETERS
OCN STORM

The 6-foot-1, 185 pound captain of the OCN Storm had a tremendous season with 80 points, but he enjoyed even better post-season as he led the Storm to the 2024-25 KJHL title. In the playoffs, the 20-year-old from Winkler had 12 goals and 26 points in just 11 games as he was clearly the best forward in the post-season.

TOP DEFENCEMAN

BRODY MCPHERSON
PEGUIS JUNIORS

Game On's "Player to Watch" at the start of the 2024-25 season, McPherson did not disappoint. He was worth watching all season long. This past year, he was named the KJHL's Top Defenceman for the second straight year and he was brilliant from start to finish. He had 25 goals and 47 points in 29 games in the



DREW PETERS, OCN STORM, MVP AND LEADING SCORER



BRODY MCPHERSON, PEGUIS JUNIORS, TOP DEFENCEMAN



regular season (along with 217 penalty minutes) and another four goals and 15 points in eight playoff games.

"I can't say enough about Brody," said Juniors' head coach Marty Favel. "Back at the start of the season when we were going through a rough patch, all the teams were asking us about trading him and I said, 'Why would I trade my team away?'

"He's got all the tools and he's a great locker room guy. He's now a two-time Top Defenceman in this league and I think he's going to repeat again this coming season."

TOP GOALTENDER

AIDAN BISWANGER
NCN FLAMES

It's not often a guy from Phoenix, Ariz., makes it big in a place like Northern Manitoba's Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, but Biswanger is obviously the exception. The 6-foot-1, 155-pound, 20-year-old goaltender who played all his minor hockey with the Arizona Bobcats AAA and AA teams and Desert Vista High.

He joined the Flames for the 2023-24 season and went 16-11-2 with a 4.37 goals against average and an .884 save percentage. Then, last season, he went 12-4-0 as he led the NCN Flames to a first-place finish in the KJHL with a 3.15 goals against average and .903 save percentage. He was clearly the best goaltender in the league in 2024-25.

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

CORWYN BEAR
PEGUIS JUNIORS

Corwyn Bear came out of the Interlake Lightning U17 AAA team and jumped right in with the Juniors. The 17-year-old had 21 goals and 43 points in his rookie season and another three goals and seven points in eight playoff games.

"This kid does everything," said Favel. "He's a great team guy. He's the first person on the bus and the last to leave the hotel. He makes sure everyone on the team is ready to go. He's a really motivated kid and I hope he doesn't come back this season. And I mean that in a very positive way.

"He's going to some Jr. A camps, and I really hope he makes it someplace. He deserves to play at the next level. I'll be thrilled to get him back, but he had a great year last year and it would be better if he got a chance to play Jr. A. He's a really great talent and at 17, he's got some great years of Jr. A ahead of him."

"HARD TO IMAGINE ANYONE HAVING A BETTER SEASON THAN DREW PETERS"

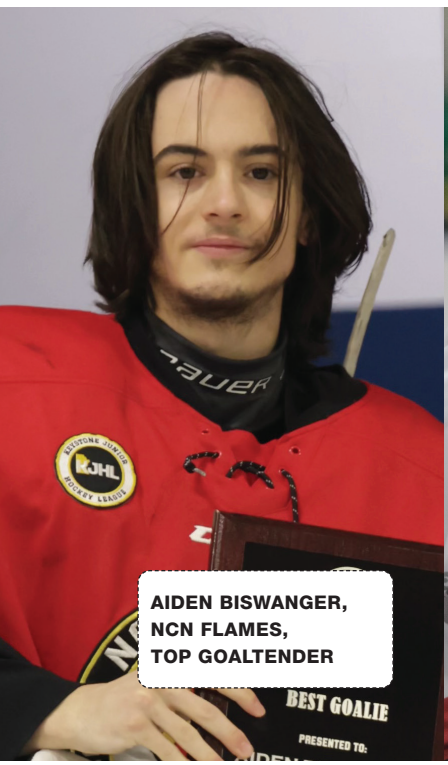
COACH OF THE YEAR

MARTY FAVEL
PEGUIS JUNIORS

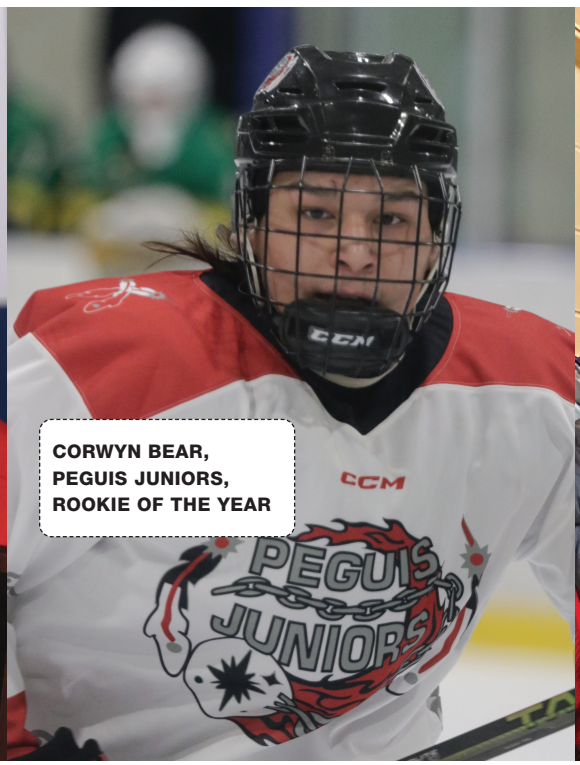
The Juniors went 18-14-2 last season after a terrible start, but Favel got the team back on track and took them to their eighth provincial Jr. B final in a row.

"I wasn't expecting that," Favel said. "I knew I was a finalist, but I figured that because NCN had such a great year (25-7-2) that their guys would win it and I also thought that Skylar (Tait-Reaume) had a great year in Norway House and he would finish ahead of me, but when they posted it, I was shocked. It definitely wasn't something I was expecting.

"But it sure was good to be recognized. I don't put any emphasis on awards because the truth is, you just want to have a good core group of guys who are respected individuals in the community. It's always about the team and the individual players first."



AIDEN BISWANGER, NCN FLAMES, TOP GOALTENDER



CORWYN BEAR, PEGUIS JUNIORS, ROOKIE OF THE YEAR


MARTY FAVEL, PEGUIS JUNIORS, COACH OF THE YEAR

A SECOND CHANCE

BY JOHNSTON HALL
Photos by Kelly Jacobson

Harlan Jacobson wasn't ready to quit. He loves hockey and at the age of 21, it didn't seem right that he had no place to play at a truly competitive level.

But as things sometimes happen, Jacobson had a stroke of luck. A group of ex-NHLers and college coaches in Alberta have long been working on something that has been called "a second chance league."

And, just at the right time for Jacobson, a young man who was born and raised in Cranberry Portage, Manitoba, the Alberta Elite Hockley League will begin its inaugural season this fall.

"This is a second chance league for 21-year-old junior players," said Gatlin Church, Jacobson's former coach with the PBCN Selects of the Keystone Junior Hockey League and the new head coach and general manager of the AEHL's Lac la Biche Islanders. "A lot of 20-year-olds find themselves without a place to play, but they still have the drive to play competitive junior hockey and maybe get another shot at a college or university program. That's what we're to provide – that second chance. For a player like Harlan Jacobson, this league is perfect."

Last season, in what was his 20-year-old year, Jacobson had five goals and 18 points in 44 games for the North Vancouver Wolf Pack of the Pacific Jr. A Hockey League. A hard-worker with speed and skill, the knock on Jacobson has always been his size. He's listed at 5-foot-8, 170 pounds, and there aren't many scouts looking closely at little guys anymore.

But that doesn't mean his heart is small. He wants to play college hockey but he does have standards. He wants to be able to afford it and he wants to take courses that interest him.

"I just felt like the AEHL was one of the better options I had this season," he said. "I had a couple of college offers, but they were at ACHA D-2 schools, and they were very expensive. Let's say, a little out of my budget. And none of them had the programs I wanted to take.

"Then, my old coach reached out to me and gave me this opportunity, and I didn't really look back. My goal is to go to college and play hockey after this season. I felt like this new league would give me a chance to be seen if I put together a good year. And I like Gat as a coach. He can be hard sometimes, but he's a good guy."

Jacobson not only learned the game in Northern Manitoba, but until last year, when he decided to move to Vancouver, he had played all of his hockey in the northwest corner of the province.

"I played hockey in Flin Flon until my first year of bantam and that's when I switched to OCN," he explained. "I tried to play in OCN for a year, but then someone in Hockey Manitoba or someplace said I couldn't play there. They said I had to play minor hockey in the closest place to where I lived and that was in Flin Flon -- we're an hour north of OCN, but a half-hour south of Flin Flon -- but I didn't want to play there, so I went home and played high school hockey in Cranberry. I didn't develop a lot that year, but I was able to go back to OCN to play junior when I was 17.

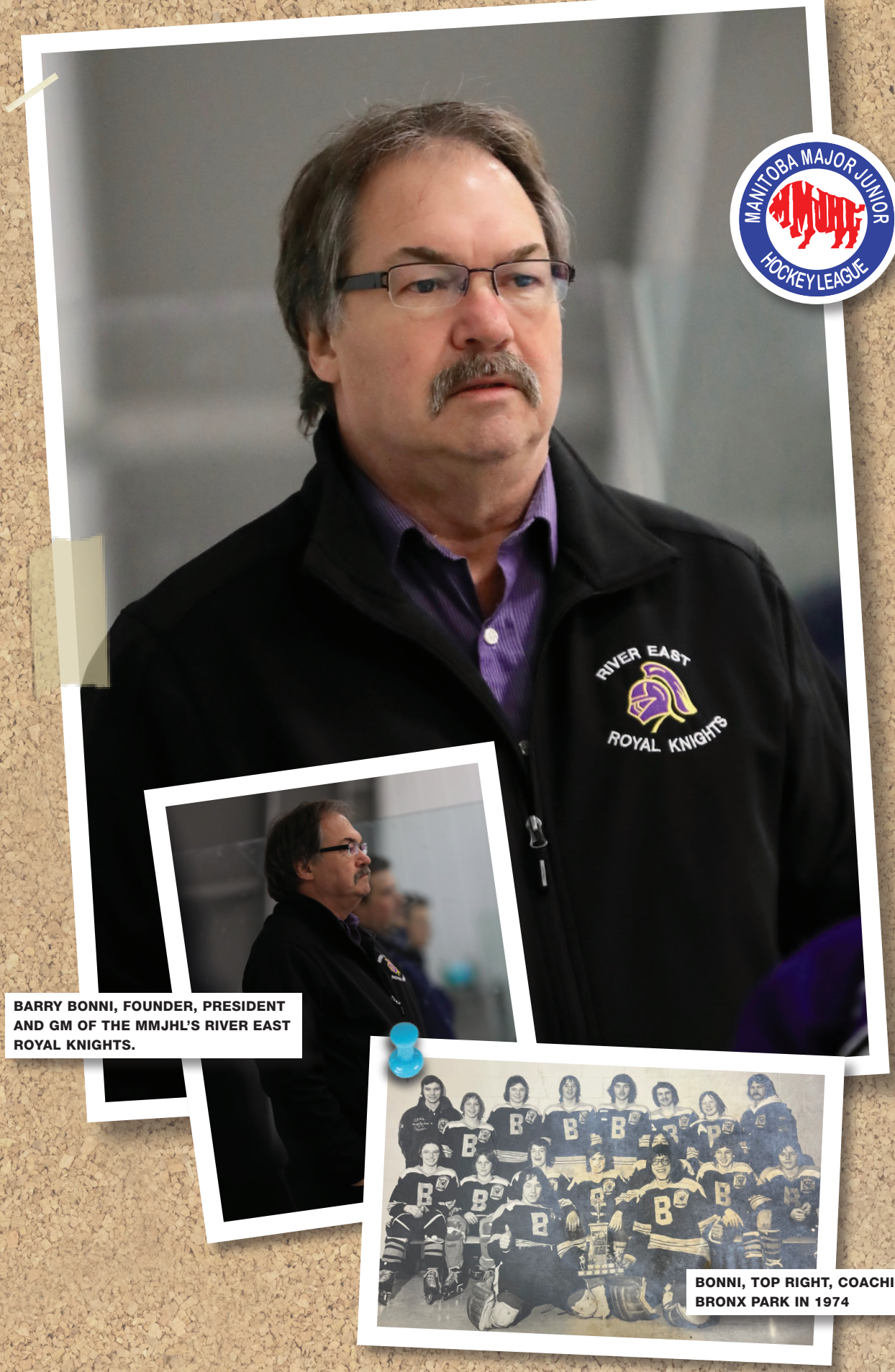
"I eventually attended the OCN Blizzard Jr. A ID camp and made it to the main camp, but I got cut from the main camp, so I played with the Jr. B Storm and then PBCN. It's hard living in a small town, but I'm glad I made it out and had a chance to play in OCN and then Vancouver."

Church is thrilled to have Jacobson join his new team in Lac la Biche.

"I wanted Harlan on our team because I need someone with experience and confidence to provide secondary scoring," Church said. "He's been an underrated player his entire life, but while he might be small, he's a great little hockey player who will now get another chance to have a university watch him play in an elite junior hockey setting. And we're also an AP league for the British Columbia Junior Hockey League, so this is a perfect situation for a player like Harlan."



JACOBSON MIGHT BE SMALL. BUT HE'S NOT AFRAID



BARRY BONNI, FOUNDER, PRESIDENT AND GM OF THE MMJHL'S RIVER EAST ROYAL KNIGHTS.

BONNI, TOP RIGHT, COACHING BRONX PARK IN 1974

BY SCOTT TAYLOR

Photos by Bruce Fedyck, James Carey Lauder, Lexi Minuk and the River East Royal Knights

THE LEGEND CARRIES ON

WITH A NEW COACH AT THE HELM, FOUNDER, PRESIDENT AND GM BARRY BONNI, AN HONOURED MEMBER OF THE MANITOBA HOCKEY HALL OF FAME, IS ABOUT TO OPEN HIS 44TH SEASON WITH THE RIVER EAST ROYAL KNIGHTS

There is nothing Barry Bonni can't tell you about the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League.

After all, the soon-to-be-73-year-old patriarch of the River East Royal Knights, founded his hockey team 44 seasons ago, when he was just 28-years-old.

This is a man who has been GM or head coach or both since the 1981-82 MMJHL season. He's won 700 games and six league championships. But this year, he was faced with a difficult decision.

For seven years, Blake Bonni, Barry's son, had been the club's head coach. Three seasons ago, Blake was named the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League's Coach of the Year, but to be fair, and for whatever reason, the team had struggled the past two seasons.

Both Blake and Barry are very clear: "We both want what's best for the River East franchise."

However, despite a number of conversations, Blake and Barry decided that they had vastly different opinions about the direction of the team. Ultimately, the two concluded that the time had come for a new voice in the Royal Knights' room.

"Three years ago, Blake was Coach of the Year," Barry said. "But as hard as it is, when it's your own kid, It's something we had to do."

Now that a new season is right around the corner, both father and son appear to be good with the decision, Blake's replacement will officially be a veteran coach who starred for Barry when the Royal Knights won the Jack McKenzie Trophy in 2001.

"Our new coach will be Manny Minuk Sr. He played for me on the 2001 championship team," said Barry. "His son, Manny Jr. played goal for us the past three seasons and now he's aged out of junior so that cuts out any conflict of interest. Manny Sr. was a forward who could fly (88 points in 80 games over two seasons with the Royal Knights from 2000-2002), and I think he'll make a great coach."

Interestingly, Barry Bonni, a legend in junior hockey in Manitoba and a man who was inducted into the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame in 2017, got to where he is today because of coaching.

"In 1970, I started coaching baseball at Bronx Park," he recalled. "Then in 1974, I started coaching hockey at Bronx Park. A couple years later, it got to be too much. I was coaching both baseball and hockey and even though they're in different seasons, it took up a lot of time and effort. I was also a much better hockey coach than I was a baseball coach, so I dropped baseball but continued to coach hockey at Bronx Park."

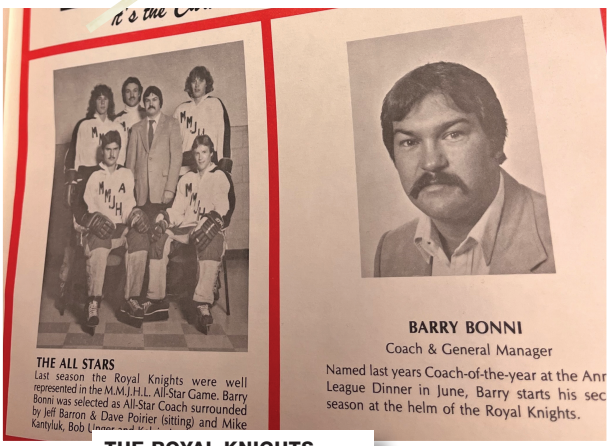
Bonni won three championships there and then moved to River East Minor Hockey and started coaching in the tier system. In three years at River East, he won a couple of championships, including



BARRY BONNI BEHIND THE BENCH BACK IN 2017



BONNI WORKING THE OFFICIALS IN 2006



THE ALL STARS

Last season the Royal Knights were well represented in the M.M.J.H.L. All-Star Game. Barry Bonni was selected as All-Star Coach surrounded by Jeff Barron & Dave Poirier (sitting) and Mike Kantyluk, Bob

BARRY BONNI

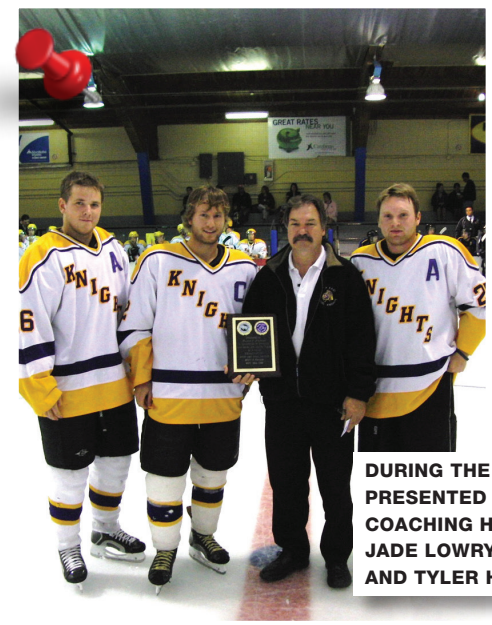
Coach & General Manager

Named last years Coach-of-the-year at the Ann League Dinner in June, Barry starts his sec season at the helm of the Royal Knights.

THE ROYAL KNIGHTS PROGRAM FROM 1982-83



BONNI AND HIS KNIGHTS IN 2006



DURING THE 2008-09 SEASON, BONNI WAS PRESENTED WITH A SPECIAL AWARD FOR COACHING HIS 1,000TH GAME. FROM LEFT JADE LOWRY, MATT ROMANYCHYN, BONNI AND TYLER HILL.

the River East Marauders Tier 2 Juvenile team.

"In 1980, I was coaching the Marauders juvenile team and also helping the East Kildonan Knights of the MMJHL run their training camps in September," he explained. "Then, at the end of the 1980-81 season, the Knights folded, and I looked at that and thought, 'That's awful, an area like River East and we're not going to have a junior hockey team?' And so, I ended up getting on my white horse, started a new team and I chose the name Royal Knights. I took the name Royals from River East Minor Hockey. Then I took the name Knights in respect of the East Kildonan Knights that had operated for eight years, So, I started the Royal Knights in 1981 and haven't stopped."

In 1981, he coached the brand-new Royal Knights to the MMJHL championship and was named Coach of the Year. Between 1986 and 1990 he led the Royal Knights to four consecutive MMJHL championships. He won his sixth title with the Knights in 2000-01 and won his fourth Coach of the Year award that same season.

He has won more than 700 of the 1000-plus games he's coached in the MMJHL

"I'm now the senior guy in our league," Bonni said. "Every team calls me at one point or another for advice, including Kerry Lines, our president. I appreciate that they have that respect for me that they still want to call me.

"Sometimes Kerry or somebody will say something in a meeting and then I'll be called on to clarify stuff. Because I've been around so long, I was there when a lot of the league by-laws were written. And with a lot of the rules in any league, you can read the rule and misinterpret it. But I know what it was meant to be."

Bonni has been around so long, he's seen three teams leave the league (the Midland Flyers, the Seven Oaks Raiders and Transcona Railers) and welcomed four new teams into the league (the Transcona Railer-Express, the Stonewall Jets, the Pembina Valley Twisters and the Raiders Junior Hockey Club).

He also spent a couple of years in the mid-1990s operating a Senior club on top of the Royal Knights.

"Yeah, for two years, 1994-95 and 1995-96, I ran the River East Rogues Sr. A team in the Winnipeg Senior A Hockey League, which got started a few years before the old CASH League folded," he recalled. "We only operated for two seasons, but I won the championship in the first season and lost in the finals to Charleswood in the second season. Then, one of the teams bailed and a new team came in.

"And we were going to start the league with four teams, but that new team was on very shaky ground financially, and we didn't think they'd last past Christmas. So, I said, 'Boys, I'm not going with a three-team league. I'm out,' and the league folded. It was fun. I will say that it was fun. But it just got to the point that, financially and competitively, something had to give. Honestly, I would have kept it going if we'd had four strong teams."

So, as we begin the MMJHL's 2025-26 season, Barry Bonni will have Manny Minuk Sr. behind the bench with his new assistants, Anthony Jacob and Manny Minuk Jr., both former Royal Knights players themselves. The 44th year of the River East Royal Knights will look brand, spanking new.



NEW HEAD COACH MANNY MINUK SR.

And the new head coach is excited about the upcoming season. "Having Manny Jr. gives me a goalie coach right away and getting Anthony, Manny Jr.'s best friend, means we have two guys who know the organization and are super smart," Minuk Sr. said. "They're great dressing-room guys, they are both into the stats and the systems and they're good communicators. So, I think they're really built to be coaches.

"Barry and I always had a good relationship over the years and I'm just super honoured that he called and asked me to coach his team. With Manny Jr. and Anthony, we just want to be a part of the growth of this team and help Barry out, and I feel very fortunate to be given the opportunity."

Meanwhile, as Barry gets set to start his fourth campaign as the owner and president of the Royal Knights, he will admit, the jobs he undertakes are getting tougher.

"It's been a fun ride," Bonni said. "But it's getting to a point where I'd like to not have the responsibility. When we started this team, we were paying $20 an hour for ice. Now we're paying, I think it's $235 an hour. It's become a rich man's sport, and I hate that.

"But I'll admit, I count my pennies. We try to do everything we can for our players, but I watch our budget. After 44 years, the last thing I need is for this team to fold. I've done everything there is to do in hockey, but more than anything else, I want this team to go on forever and I want it to maintain the name Royal Knights."

SIZE DOESN'T MATTER

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Merlin Heppner





MORDEN'S OWEN VANROBAEYS IS NOT A BIG MAN, BUT HE DOES HAVE SKILLS AND A GREAT ATTITUDE. HE'S EXACTLY THE TYPE OF VETERAN PLAYER THE PEMBINA VALLEY TWISTERS COACHING STAFF WILL BE TAPPING TO LEAD THE TEAM'S RESURGENCE.

PEMBINA VALLEY TWISTERS FORWARD OWEN VANROBAEYS calls himself "a movie guy."

He doesn't play a lot of golf or baseball – one ball tournament a summer in Clearwater -- in the off-season and he admits that he hasn't got many hobbies.

But he does love movies.

And like so many connoisseurs of the art, his all-time favourite is The Shawshank Redemption.

"I love a lot of movies," he said. "But I think The Shawshank Redemption is a really good story. Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman are great. And I also like the director, Frank Darabont. He's done a lot of



DIMINUTIVE OWEN VANROBAEYS OF THE PEMBINA VALLEY TWISTERS

great work, but Shawshank is just perfection."

This season, Pembina Valley head coach Braeden Beernaerts expects a lot from his resident movie critic. Last year, the Twisters had a tough go, finishing last in the Manitoba Major Hockey League with a record of 3-40-2, but a brand new season is on the horizon and everyone in the Pembina Valley organization expects better days ahead. Beernaerts certainly expects a big year from Vanrobaeys, a diminutive right-handed shooting playmaker.

"Owen isn't the biggest player in the league, but he doesn't let that affect him," said Twisters head coach Braeden Beernaerts. "He brings a ton of speed and skill to the game and sees the ice incredibly well. This year I know Owen will make a massive step in his role and will help the team make the playoffs this year."

Vanrobaeys is listed at 5-foot-7, 150 pounds, but admits he really doesn't know or pay attention to his size.

"No, I'm not very big," he said with a laugh. "I don't actually know how tall I am. I don't really measure. I don't want to know.

"But it's easy to notice me out there, I'm not the tallest guy on the ice. People have described me as shifty, going from side-to-side, trying to find space among the bigger guys. I don't want to get crushed by those guys. I'm more of a play-maker than a goal scorer. I like setting up my teammates. I'm an assist guy."

He had five goals and 12 points in 45 games last season, his rookie year, in the MMJHL, but he had a big year in 2023-24. He and Darby Olson played a season of ACHA D-II hockey with the Lake Region State College Royals, and had nine goals and 25 points in 25 games.

Now, going into his second season in the MMJHL, this 20-year-old from Morden is expected to be one of the driving forces behind a Twisters' resurgence.

"I first skated when I was around four years old and I played all my minor hockey in Morden," he explained. "Then I was playing high school hockey with the Morden Thunder alongside Darby (Olson) and Josh (Guilford) who are both on the Twisters with me now. High school was the most fun hockey I've ever played.

"After high school, me and Darby went down to the States and played some college hockey at Lake Region State College in Devil's Lake. Now, we're with the Twisters.

"Playing with the Twisters is fun," he said. "We have a good group of guys. I'd just like to win a bit more. Hopefully, we'll be better next year. We just need to lock down our systems a bit better. We have a good coach, so we'll be OK. I think we'll do well."

Vanrobaeys just spent his off-season doing tree work and landscaping for the City of Morden and in September, he'll enroll in the electrical engineering program at Red River Polytechnic in Winnipeg.

"It figure it might be a little difficult," he admitted, "But I'm excited to get started."

He's also excited to get back into his Twisters jersey and start the new MMJHL season. After all, it's comeback time in Morris.

"Owen always comes to the rink with a great attitude," said Coach Beernaerts. "He's always ready to work hard, and he leads by example on and off the ice. We're looking for a lot from Owen this season."

THREE-TIME MMJHL CHAMPION

PEMBINA VALLEY TWISTERS

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



HEAD COACH,
BRAEDEN BEERNAERTS

OWEN VANROBAEYS

JOSH GUILFORD

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

654 MAIN STREET MORRIS, MB, ROG 1K0 1-204-746-2411

BY PAUL EDMONDS
Photos by Genevieve Dussault

PERREAULT, THE PRO

It's not infrequent that a rookie player enters a new league and dominates, but the rarity of it happening makes it exceptional when it does.

Ludovic Perreault had that type of season last winter, barging into the Manitoba U18 Hockey League (MU18HL) as a 15-year-old and absolutely carving it up.

The first-year forward with the U18 AAA Winnipeg Wild led the league in regular season and playoff scoring in a campaign that even he has difficulty conveying into words.

"I'm not quite sure on how to describe it," says Perreault, now 16. "Getting comfortable at U18 took a little longer that I thought it would. But I started feeling more confident around Game 15 and I could feel from there that I could make the biggest difference on our team."

At the conclusion of the Wild's regular season, Perreault paced the entire league in goals (40) and points (86) through 44 games, nearly a two-points-per-game average in helping the Wild to a second-place finish in the standings.

From there, the 2024 first round (18th overall) pick of the Western Hockey League's Victoria Royals found another level in the playoffs.

Again, he claimed the MU18HL's post-season scoring title with a league-best 13 goals and 21 points, including four game-winning goals as the Wild captured the league title over the Brandon Wheat Kings in a three-game sweep.

Perhaps the exclamation mark on the series was Perreault's two goals in the final game that included an unassisted overtime winner to send the Wild to the TELUS West Regional in Kenora and the recognition as the MU18HL's playoff most valuable player.

Overall, it was a tremendous experience for Perreault in understanding how to deal with high-leverage hockey, while mirroring a heavy game schedule like the one he's destined to play as his career ascends.

"I learned how I can perform with more pressure," he says. "And it was more of a WHL schedule as we moved along, which I liked."

From that standpoint, Perreault's ability to flourish in the most important time of the year was quite visible to those around him.

"In my opinion everything that he does is elite," says head coach Paul Krueger, who just completed his 23rd season behind the Wild bench.

"He understands the game and plays it at a level that a lot of 15-year-olds have never played the game at.

"Was he the best 15-year-old that I've ever coached? He could possibly be, yes!"

As a result of his stellar season overall, the now Grade 11 bilingual student at Centre scolaire Léo-Rémillard was named the 2024-25 Winnipeg AAA Council Impact Player of the Year - a prestigious award presented annually to the top player among all 12 teams under the Winnipeg AAA umbrella.

"The first time he stepped on the ice with us at tryouts,


CCM
L. PERREAULT
15

I couldn't sign him on the roster fast enough," says Krueger. "He makes players around him better.

"And Ludo is a great teammate. He's not out there for the glory for himself. He wants to be the guy, but he wants to be the difference maker for the team and for the team's success."

According to his coach, Perreault has an innate ability. Attributes like vision, hockey IQ, skating, shooting and making plays are all at an advanced level for his age.

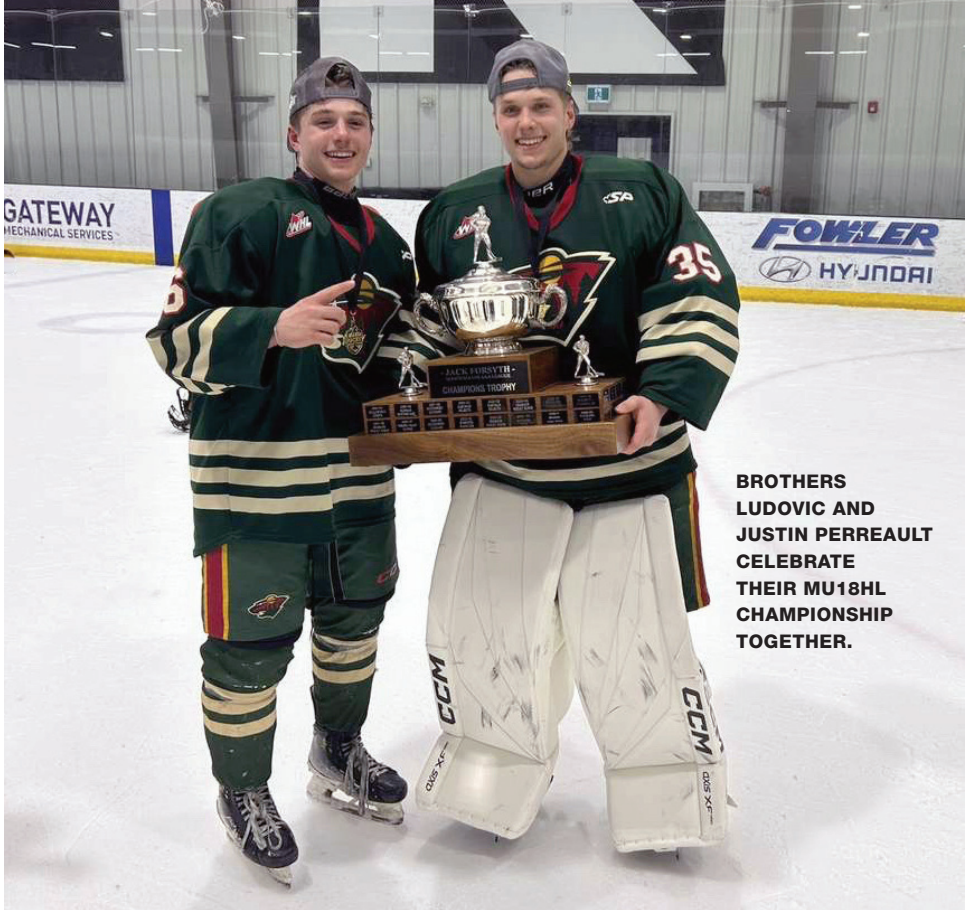
But when you combine those assets with a work ethic second to none, it's a gifted package that delivered a remarkable season in a league where the competition could be as much as 26 months older.

"Whether it's a practice or in games he just does not take shifts off," says Krueger. "What sets him apart from everybody else is his motor does not stop. I've never coached a kid that is able to go as long and hard as he is."

Playing both centre and wing, Perreault was used in all situations last season and despite the extraordinary offensive numbers he never cheated defence for offence.

"I really had to focus on winning puck battles first," says Perreault, who was also named as the MU18HL's Rookie of the Year and a First Team All-Star. "And I understand that offence comes from good defence, especially when you're playing against people with longer sticks."

For Perreault, this was particularly important as part of an older team and personally when standing just five-foot-nine and 161 pounds.



BROTHERS LUDOVIC AND JUSTIN PERREAULT CELEBRATE THEIR MU18HL CHAMPIONSHIP TOGETHER.

"He's such a complete player and one that plays 200 feet," says Krueger. "And he's a not a big kid, but he plays big. There's no fear in him. All he wants to do is be successful. I can't say enough good things about him."

As mentioned, being the youngest of the three age groups at the U18 level requires proving yourself to the returning and veteran players.

For Perreault, that situation was definitely unique on the Wild this past season, since he also played with his older brother, Justin, a goalie in his third and final campaign in the MU18HL.

Although the brothers both previously played in the Winnipeg AAA Bruins system, both moved over to the Wild last season when the Winnipeg AAA Hockey Council restructured the catchment boundaries to better equalize player distribution.

This not only allowed for the two Perreaults to play together for the first time in their careers, but it was also a boon for the U18 Wild program.

In his major season, Justin Perreault captured the MU18HL's Most Valuable Player and Top Goaltender awards and was also a significant contributor to the Wild's success last season.

In addition, he was a valuable resource to his younger brother all winter, as the two traveled together to school, practice and games.

The dynamic worked out well, not only as brothers but friends, and according to Ludo was a "cool experience."

"We were together all the time," he says. "We became that much closer last year. He was a tremendous resource for me. He knew how to play in the league and he knew what was coming. I looked up to him. He showed me the example.

"Having him as one of the leaders on the team and by my side made me feel that much more confident."

Of course, the siblings will be moving on in different directions this season, as Justin has his sights set on cracking either the WHL's Wenatchee Wild or MJHL's Winkler Flyers roster.

For the younger Perreault the best of his hockey career is undoubtedly yet to come.

For his part, Ludo skated all off-season and worked out in the gym at least four-to-five times per week. And based on last year's performance there appears to be a solid chance he'll be part of the WHL's Victoria Royals for 2025-26.

"That's where I've worked up to," says Perreault, who also enjoys tennis, golf and was even a member of his high school's Division III lacrosse championship team last spring.

"Hopefully I get a shot."

U18 AAA



JUSTIN PERREAULT
U18 WINNIPEG WILD

MBU18AAAHOCKEY.CA

2024-2025 MU18HL MOST VALUABLE PLAYER
2024-2025 MU18HL TOP GOALTENDER
2024-2025 U18 WINNIPEG AAA COUNCIL MOST VALUABLE PLAYER



FROM U11 TO THE PROS, R1 HAS YOU COVERED

BY CARTER BROOKS
Photos by Dylan Asmundson



Some call the summer months the offseason. At the RINK, it's the proving grounds of preparation for the year to come. And for a number of local professional hockey players, the RINK is their summer home.

Some may argue the minus-40 degree winter days are Manitoba's best. They're certainly unique to the middle province, but it is during the summer months where Manitoba's true colours shine through. And why wouldn't athletes who were born and raised in and around Winnipeg make their way back to train in the province that gave them their start in hockey?

According to the RINK's Director of On-Ice Development and Programming, Jon Cara, most players do.

"Within our R1 summer program grouping, if you look at the flow of it, we've got basically every pro from the area that is available, skating here," Cara told *Game On*. "Seth Jarvis, Travis Hamonic, Cody Glass, Brett Howden, Keegan Kolesar, Dylan McIlrath, Jett Woo... the list goes on. And then like goalie-wise, we've got Calvin Pickard, Joel Hofer, Isaac Poulter, Tyler Brennan. They just all keep coming back to our R1 program which we've been running here for the past 13 years."

The RINK's R1 off-season program is designed to cater to the specific needs of athletes at different levels, from U11 to professional. It offers a unique approach by tailoring the program to each athlete's schedule and goals, rather than the other way around – which is what is commonly found at other training camps/facilities.

The R1 program is designed to cater to individual athletes' needs, with curriculums tailored to each age group. The program is divided into three phases: off-ice training to build a foundation and address weaknesses, on-ice skill development focusing on skating, passing, shooting, and puck control, and finally, sports-specific training and gameplay preparation. The program aims to provide a structured and progressive perspective on player development, ensuring athletes are prepared for the next level.

Offering a comprehensive approach, including injury rehabilitation, skate sharpening, apparel packages and tactical video analysis, the R1 program's success is measured by the long-term relationships and achievements of its athletes, including Stanley Cup wins and university scholarships.

"It has evolved a lot, but the ability to have a skating program and an office program in one facility that you can come to where trust is developed for your level, and that provides you all the amenities you could want is really what separates our programs from any other," Cara added. "We basically built out a program at a professional level for on and off-ice programming. All the way from U11 up to pro.



SETH JARVIS

We look at each athlete's needs based on the demands of their schedules, and we create a program based around that athlete and what exactly that athlete needs."

For instance, U13 athletes participating in the R1 program would begin skating at the RINK near the start of August, as their tryouts would be the second week of September and they generally need five weeks of training. U18 athletes would begin at the start of summer, while junior/pro athletes report to camp in June.

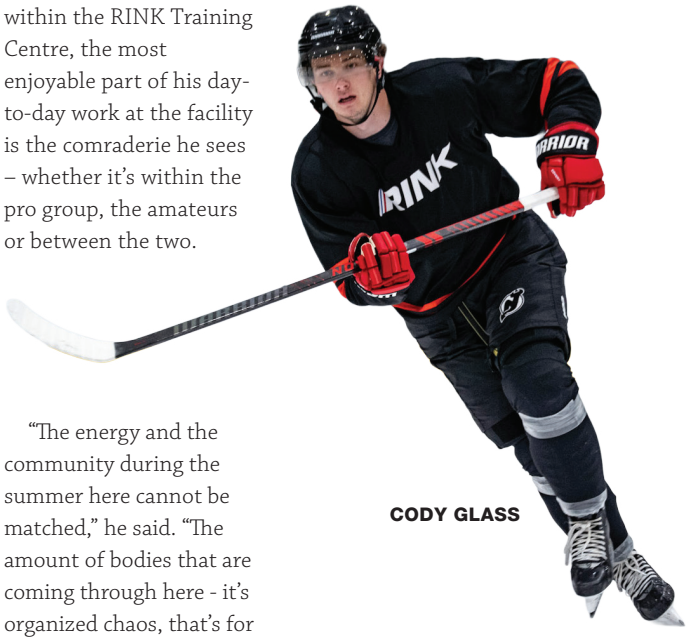
The model uses three phases for both the on and off-ice training. The first phase focuses on core skills, post-season recovery and off-season prep. Phase 2 is position-specific and application work alongside addressing weaknesses and strength building off-ice. The third phase includes high-tempo prep, gameplay and sport-specific transfer.

"The frequency of their on-ice sessions picks up as time goes on," Cara said. "You're going to see them skating anywhere from four to five times during that last phase. So, when they get to training camp, they've already gone through a little mini training camp here with us. They'll be flying by the time they get there. Each of those phases builds them up at each of our levels all the way from U11 to our pros. They're all seeing each of those phases, but it's tapered differently for when they start and how long their program is."



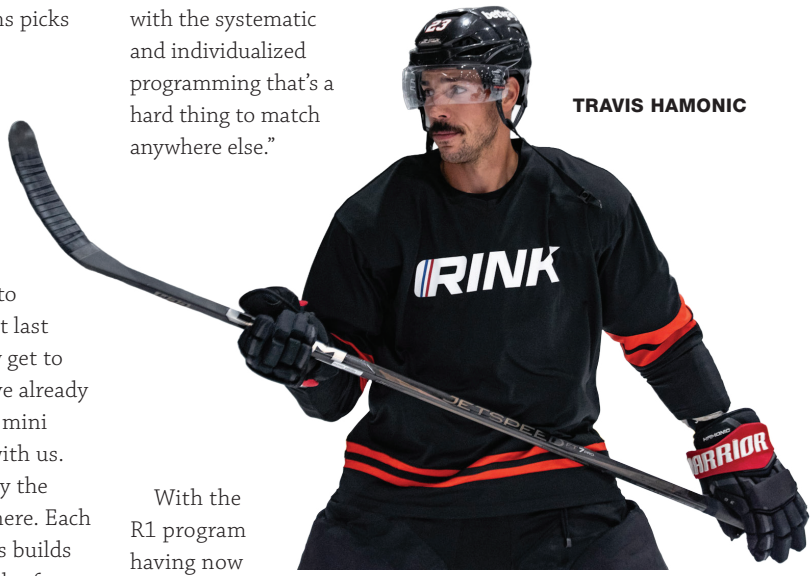
DYLAN MCILRATH

For Matt Asmundson, Manager of Sports Science and Performance at Testify Performance within the RINK Training Centre, the most enjoyable part of his day-to-day work at the facility is the comraderie he sees – whether it's within the pro group, the amateurs or between the two.



CODY GLASS

"The energy and the community during the summer here cannot be matched," he said. "The amount of bodies that are coming through here - it's organized chaos, that's for sure. But the energy, paired with the systematic and individualized programming that's a hard thing to match anywhere else."



TRAVIS HAMONIC

With the R1 program having now concluded its offseason work, it will be set for its 14th year of operation next summer. The opportunity to skate, learn, watch, listen and workout in the very same gym, classrooms and ice surfaces alongside some of the very best players in the game is most definitely one of the RINK's biggest selling points.

"On the summer offseason and off-ice training side of things, it's an opportunity to fill buckets that haven't been touched or filled all season," Asmundson added. "Depending what level you're at, it's going to be done better or worse, but here we will do a full diagnosis and with our profiling system we will be able to point out weaknesses and work on them at your current point in your development journey. Those initial weeks during the off-ice side of things, people see a ton of return on their investment."


THE BEST WAY TO
TRAIN
Skill Development on Your Schedule
Available for Ages U7, U9, U11, U13 & U15
RINK Training Centre
September - November
therink.ca/PRE-SEASON

THE FUTURE OF THE NAHC

KEANDRA BROUGHTON IS A 15-YEAR-OLD PHENOM WHO WAS ONE OF THE SURPRISE STARS OF THE 2025 NATIONAL ABORIGINAL HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP. LAST YEAR, BROUGHTON PLAYED AAA U15 BOYS' HOCKEY WITH THE WINNIPEG THRASHERS BLUE. THIS YEAR, SHE'S SWITCHING TO THE GIRLS' GAME AT THE MOUNT ACADEMY IN P.E.I. BUT DALE BEAR KNOWS SHE'LL BE BACK IN MAY TO DEFEND TEAM MANITOBA'S GOLD MEDAL.



BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Lucas Rotondo and Nick Lacoste

Sometimes, it just takes two. For Dale Bear, the head coach of the 2025 gold medal-winning Female Indigenous Team Manitoba, there is a deep belief that two young defenders will make his team's National Aboriginal Hockey Championship future particularly bright.

Attica Sobering, 16, who plays at the RINK Hockey Academy and Keandra Broughton, who just turned 15 and was 14 during the NAHC and will play her first season at The Mount Academy in North Rustico, PEI, are the future of the team and Bear can't wait to see them back on the ice for the 2026 NAHC in Regina this May.

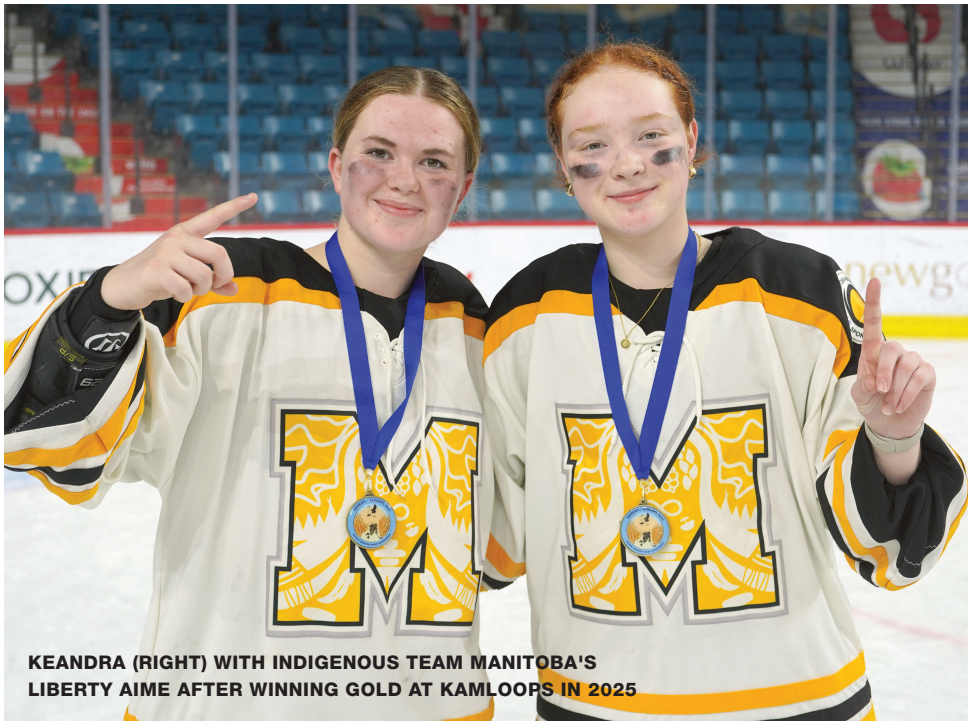
"Of the five top teams in last May's tournament, any one of them could have won the gold," Bear said. "They were all pretty even, but I think ultimately, what won it for us was our defence. We had Linnea Misner, she's a superstar, but we also had Attica Sobering and Keandra and they both stepped up. Keandra was the biggest surprise of all. I knew she was good, but I didn't think she was going to be that good. She ended up being a very strong defender for me at Kamloops.

"She's a heads-up player, who is fast but also very calm with the puck. She gets the puck off her stick quickly, but she always makes the right decisions. She's smart and you couldn't ask for a better team player. You're not going to find anybody with a better attitude than her."

Keandra's father, Chris,



KEANDRA BROUGHTON, TEAM MANITOBA MOST SPORTSMANLIKE PLAYER



KEANDRA (RIGHT) WITH INDIGENOUS TEAM MANITOBA'S LIBERTY AIME AFTER WINNING GOLD AT KAMLOOPS IN 2025

was quite flattered that Bear would compare his daughter to Sobering.

"Dale and his coaching staff have been beyond incredible," Chris said. "They are truly amazing people with a love of hockey and a genuine passion for developing the young women who play for them.

"To have Dale speak so highly of Keandra and to associate her with Attica is going to be whiteboard material here for a while. Attica is an incredible player and someone Keandra looks up to in her development."

SWITCHING TO GIRLS' HOCKEY

Keandra would appear to be developing quickly. Last season, she played AAA Boys U15 with Winnipeg Thrashers Blue. This fall, she'll head to Prince Edward Island to play Prep hockey at the Mount Academy. By playing girls' hockey, even at a high level, it will help Coach Bear with his anxiety.

"She's switching over to girls' hockey, which is the perfect age for her to do that," said Bear. "Last year, I went and watched her quite a few times. I was a little concerned with her play. It was always very good, and she played a lot, gaining lots of experience. But I was just scared that she was going to get hurt because there are some boys who like running girls in that league. On one hand, it helped her play heads-up, thinking about the game really quickly, but I was just on edge watching her."

Bear's concern was lost on Keandra. After all, she says she not only liked the aggressive nature of boys' AAA hockey, but she thrived on it. Of course, we are talking about a 15-year-old Churchill High School student who played varsity football last season.

"Dale likes keeping an eye out for me, so I can see how I make him nervous sometimes," she said. "I mean, I started playing tackle football for my high school last year and I just sort of kept at it. I was a running back and a DB, but they don't offer football at The Mount, so I'll just be playing hockey this year."

Unquestionably, knowing she's not playing football will help Bear get a little more sleep. Then again, he doesn't lose any sleep over the quality of her play.

A defender who had a goal and seven assists in 24 games for the Thrashers in 2024-25, Broughton grew up playing boys' hockey. She started out playing Timbits in Fort Garry North and moved up through the Twins and Thrashers program.

PRODUCT OF JETS RETURN

Her father has a theory as to why she started and took to the game so quickly.

"She is really a product of the return of the Jets," said Chris. "While young at the time, Keandra and her

"I'LL DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO GET THE PUCK OUT OF THE ZONE."









brother got very caught up in the excitement of hockey in those first few years of the Jets being back. Following her brother into the sport was just a given from her perspective."

It seems she's always loved the game.

"I just enjoyed playing hockey growing up, and then I just sort of stuck with it and started to really see myself playing hockey for the rest of my life," said Keandra, a member of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation in Northern Saskatchewan. "I was always motivated to work hard at the game. Right now, my life sort of revolves around hockey.

"Last year was a really good year for me. I had good coaches, I had good teammates, and I think I really got better with the faster pace. So, I think that really helped me become a better hockey player. This coming year, I'm going to switch over to girls' hockey, so I think this is definitely a really big time for me."

The Prep hockey that she'll play this season, in the U19 Junior Women's Hockey League, will definitely be quick, but it certainly won't be as aggressive as this past season in Winnipeg. Broughton admitted she'll miss the rough and tumble play of boys' hockey.

"I thought I was one of the more aggressive characters in AAA," said Keandra, who was Invited to Hockey Manitoba's U18 Program of Excellence Top 40 Camp that was held in June. "I like being physical, I like battling hard in the corners and I like pushing people around. I think I've gotten really good at being able to handle, you know, 14-, 15-year-old boys pushing me around, too. It's great to play aggressive hockey like that."

Although the style of play at The Mount won't be as physical as it was in AAA boys, it will be a big step on Broughton's hockey journey.

"Yeah, it's a big step, but I think it's definitely one I need to make," she said. "This is a really big opportunity for me to be seen by more colleges and universities and I think moving away from home is going to help me develop as a person, not just as a player, so I'm really excited for that."

GREAT TEAMMATE

Keandra, who is a multi-sport athlete that not only plays hockey and football but also runs track and cross-country.

She's also a player who is quite self-aware. She knows her skills and her strengths, and she knows what she has to do to get better.

"I think if you watch, you'll see me being a reliable D who can contribute offensively without sacrificing defense," she said. "I'll battle and I'll push people and I'll do what needs to be done to get the puck out of the zone."

As good as she is on the ice. Coach Bear also calls her "a great teammate," someone who enjoys the game, the room and all the things that make hockey fun.

"I think I just like being around other people that have the same sort of approach and mentality as me," she said. "Like, when we were at NAHC 2025, we were all girls similar in age that really wouldn't have met before. And I think I just really enjoyed being around other competitive teenage girls. Yeah, the NAHC was a good team, and I really enjoyed my time with that group.

"I also think it's a good tournament and I enjoyed it a lot this year, so I'm looking forward to playing for Team Manitoba again and I love playing for Dale. I have a chance to play in four of these tournaments and I can't wait for next year's NAHC to start."

NEW BLAZERS COACH READY FOR A CHALLENGE

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Scott Taylor and Rusty Barton

Some In fact, Kaatz, who has signed on for one season as the team's interim head coach while head coach and director of hockey operations Sarah Zacharias commits to a year of maternity leave, didn't even think anyone knew he was taking the job.

"On the first day I came into the school, we had a very under-wraps meeting scheduled where I was going to meet with some key people at BH," Kaatz explained. "But I walked into the school and there were six players from the current team waiting to welcome me. I guess they somehow found out that I was coming in as the new coach and they lined up as a group and welcomed me on that first day. I said, 'Well, this is really nice.'

"It's funny, because I've been coaching boys, I know that when you get to a U18 AAA locker room area, they're not going to do that kind of welcome when you're new to a program. So, I'm thinking, it already feels so good to be here. I have to admit, it immediately made me want to be able to do so much for the girls because they just care so much with this little gesture. There were six players coming back this year, and some graduating players also, who welcomed me into the program as well when I was getting a tour of the school.

"That was really nice. I was just sitting there getting my badge at the security desk and they were all lined up at the front. As soon as I walked in with the badge, they said, 'Welcome,' and then they gave me a tour of the school: 'Here's the gym, here's the arts building, here's the hockey office.' They showed me everything before I even sat down with the principals and the directors of the school. It was quite a nice welcoming."

It never hurts to be welcomed into a hockey program with open arms. It's also important under these particular circumstances. Not only will Kaatz coach the Blazers for one year – the 2025-26 season – he's also stepping into the role during the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the Blazers prep hockey program all while Balmoral Hall has taken over the prestigious Female World Sports School Challenge, a major winter hockey tournament previously hosted by St. Mary's Academy that will run Jan. 22-25, 2026 at the hockey for all centre.

FULL PLATES FOR KAATZ & DINNIN

Kaatz, and Blazers assistant coach Chelsea Dinnin, will obviously have a lot on their plates this season.

"We have some big plans for the tournament," said Kaatz, who was sitting alongside Balmoral Hall's associate director of communications, Jennifer Pawluk. "Instead of a banquet, we're going to have a Skills Competition and a celebration of female hockey. We're thrilled to take over the tournament, but it's another thing on my checklist."

Kaatz is certainly prepared for the assignment. He grew up in Windsor Park and admits, "I did the whole hockey journey."

"I was a goalie growing up," he explained. "I started at three years old. I was just playing in the Windsor Park

AARON KAATZ WAS ALREADY EXCITED ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY TO COACH THE BALMORAL HALL BLAZERS THIS SEASON, HE JUST WASN'T PREPARED FOR HIS WARM WELCOME TO THE SCHOOL.

BH BLAZERS



FIRST DAY AT THE RINK FOR BLAZERS NEW HEAD COACH AARON KAATZ



KAATZ OPENS THE 2024-25 BH BLAZERS TRAINING CAMP AT HOCKEY FOR ALL CENTRE

area, and you know how it is as kids; eventually it's your turn to play goal. After I had my turn, I knew I just liked it and so I became a goalie at four and was always a goalie from then on.

"I played AAA in the Sharks area and then went to high school at River East and played for the Kodiaks. Then once I was around the college age, I said, 'You know what? It's probably time to go to school and focus on getting my degree.' So, that's what I did, and it was a hard transition because at that age, at 18-years-old, I had played hockey for 14 years and felt I had a good career."

However, as most goalies eventually learn, there aren't a lot of jobs available. It's not like a junior team having 12 skaters and six defence. Teams have two goalies, and Kaatz realized that education was more important.

"But I still have a ton of love and passion for the game," he admitted. "So, that's when I started my coaching journey. I had done a little bit of goalie coaching during my last year of high school at River East, just to see what it was like, and I liked it. However, once I went to university, I realized that doing five courses at a time was quite a bit.

"That's when I came to the realization that even if I can't play anymore, I still wanted to stay in the game and decided to get into coaching a little bit more. I joined a minor hockey coaching staff, coaching 12-year-olds and found that it was a lot of fun. I found out that I can still be competitive. I can still have my love for the game and still be into it at a different level."



COACH KAATZ IMPARTING HIS COACHING KNOWLEDGE

THE KAATZ COACHING JOURNEY

Kaatz coached youngsters for a couple of seasons and then, at age 21, he took the national high performance coaching course, and it wasn't long before he got a job as the head coach of a AAA Bantam 2 team.

"I wanted to challenge myself, and so I did it," he said. "I was a head coach with the Winnipeg Hawks, a group of players who were only seven years younger than I was."

He says he was blessed with the opportunity and even won the Wayne Fleming Coaching Scholarship Award, presented by Sport Manitoba, during his studies at the University of Winnipeg. However, his

time as a university student was coming to an end.

"Once I completed my degree, I had a job offer in Ottawa to work for the federal government doing HR," he said. "I did that for a few years and was still coaching AAA hockey in Ottawa, but once the pandemic hit, I found myself in Ottawa working from home with no hockey. But all my family and my friends were still here in Winnipeg, so because I was working from home anyway, I decided to move back here."

Back in Winnipeg he really wanted to continue coaching, so he took a big step and accepted a job head coaching U17 AAA with Interlake for one season and then 3 seasons with its U18 AAA Lightning club. It was a 50-minute drive back-and-forth to the Lightning's home in Teulon, but it was the challenge he was after.

"I wanted a new perspective, and I found it," said Kaatz who is the fourth male coach in Blazers' history. "Coaching in a small town there was a little bit more of a communal aspect – the communities really supported the team and the program and that was eye-opening to me. I also learned a lot because they have local reporters that cover the games for their small, local newspapers, and they're calling you for comments on the games and everything else to do with the team. I really got to feel that I was a part of the community, even though I didn't live there. It was fantastic."



KAATZ WITH HIS ASSISTANT COACH CHELSEA DINNIN

PROGRAM OF EXCELLENCE

Kaatz went on to coach with Hockey Manitoba's U16 boys Program of Excellence team as well the U18 Provincial girls' team with stops along the way with the U16 Provincial girls' POE team.

"I worked with the boys for years, but Hockey Manitoba started to bring me in more and more on the female side of their programs," he explained. "Being part of the coaching staff of the U18 girls' Provincial team that's going up to nationals out east in November has been fantastic. That has really helped prepare me for what I'm stepping into here at Balmoral Hall. While I may not have done a full seven-month season with a girls' hockey program before, I have been around long enough to be able to see these athletes under pressure, under high intensity situations, whether it be team building, whether it be game situations, and I've seen how committed they are.

"Compared to boys, I've come to believe that female athletes are a lot more driven and a lot more competitive each and every day. And they just want to know so much about the game. For me, that lines up pretty well with who I am as a coach. Whether it's skill development or simply understanding the game a little bit more, I think this is going to be a really good challenge, and I'm excited about that."





FORMER RINK STAR
OWEN MARTIN AT
WINNIPEG JETS CAMP

FIVE RINK HOCKEY ACADEMY ALUMNI SELECTED BY NHL

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Photos by Dylan Asmundson and Images On Ice/Hockey Hall of Fame

When the name Peyton Kettles was announced at the 2025 NHL Draft in Los Angeles, it opened the floodgates.

Soon after Kettles (second round) put on his Pittsburgh Penguins jersey, the Philadelphia Flyers selected Matthew Gard (second round), the Montreal Canadiens called out Hayden Paupanekis's name (third round), the Winnipeg Jets selected Owen Martin (third round) and then the New York Islanders announced that Burke Hood (sixth round) would be in their development system as a brand-new goaltender.

On June 27-28, 2025, at the Peacock Theatre in L.A., of the seven Manitobans chosen in the 2025 Draft, five former members of Winnipeg's RINK Hockey Academy were selected almost one after the other.

"It's a big deal for the RINK, it really is," said Kettles. "All of us kind of back-to-back in that group is really cool. I played with Gard, Paupanekis and Martin for a year at the RINK and it was fun to be with them at the Draft.

"And I loved playing at the RINK. We got to go into the gym every day and play hockey every day. And the level of hockey was a big step up from AAA. It was a lot faster and more physical, and we played against much better players. Playing in the CSSHL is just better than other leagues at that age level."

Kettles' remarks echo the sentiments of almost every player who has had the privilege to play at RHA. Because of the experience of the coaching staffs, the ability to workout at Testify Performance and the fact you can be on the ice every day, it's no wonder that so many RHA players get drafted, first by the Western Hockey League and then by the NHL.

Matthew Gard is an excellent example of that. From the spring of 2023 to the fall of the same year, he went from the U18 Prep team at the RINK Hockey Academy right to the Red Deer Rebels of the WHL. Then, after two seasons in Red Deer, the 6-foot-5, 200-pound centre made U18 Team Canada and won a gold medal at the 2025 World Championship.



HAYDEN PAUPANEKIS WITH INDIGENOUS TEAM MANITOBA

Gard, who grew up in the Seven Oaks area of Winnipeg, credits the RINK with helping to make him an IIHF gold medalist and an NHL Draft pick.

"I really liked playing at the RINK because it set me up for the Western League," said



BURKE HOOD AT NEW YORK ISLANDERS SPRING DEVELOPMENT CAMP



MATTHEW GARD BATTLES LATVIA'S KRISJANIS SARTS IN FRONT OF TEAM LATVIA'S GOAL AT THE 2025 IIHF WORLD U18 CHAMPIONSHIP IN ALLEN, TEXAS

Gard, who also won a silver medal playing for Canada at the 2023 U16 World Ball Hockey Championships in Liberec, Czechia. "To be able to get onto the ice every day and have the gym available to me at any time made a huge difference in my game."

Brad Purdie, the RINK's U15 Prep head coach remembers well how Gard improved in his first of two seasons at RHA.

"Matt really found his game in the second half of his U15 season," recalled Purdie. "He was another player who made an immediate impact in the Western League after two years of development here at the RINK."

Hayden Paupanekis is another RINK graduate who honed an already high-level game in his one superb season at the RINK. During the 2022-23 CSSHL season he led the U18 RINK team in goals (23) while becoming one of the top prospects in the CSSHL.

"My goal was to make it in the Dub and have a good year there," he said. "I never gave any thought to the college route. When I got to the RINK, my goal was the Western League because I've always wanted to play pro hockey. The RINK definitely prepared me to play at the WHL level."

Owen Martin, meanwhile, was a player who was destined to play at a high level when he arrived at the RINK as a U15 player –playing at the U18 level -- in 2022. After all, he was a player who would go hard to the net without any fear at all and his style was compared to that of Matthew Tkachuk's. He's exactly the type of player the Winnipeg Jets were looking for on Draft Day.

Martin played all of his minor hockey in the Eastman region and started as a youngster with the Springfield Ice Hawks

"I don't even remember how old I was when I started," he said. "I was probably around four or five. I played minor hockey with the Springfield Ice Hawks in my hometown in Oakbank. I eventually decided to go play at RHA because it's such a great facility and it was obviously the best place for me to develop and get ready to play at the next level."

As for goaltender Burke Hood, U15 head coach Brad Purdie always believed he'd be a prospect.

"Hood was a big goalie, taller than 6-feet when he arrived in 2021 as a 2007," said Purdie. "If you're a shooter, you'll look up and you won't see much net, it plays with your mind right away. Hopefully, he can use that size to his advantage."

It appears that he has, all thanks to the goalie coaches at the RINK.

All five of these RHA graduates now appear to be ready to take on the next level. And all five agree that the RINK was the place that improved their game and got them ready for whatever the next level has to offer.



PEYTON KETTLES

RINK Alumni Selected in 2025 NHL Entry Draft

Rnd	Overall	Pos	Name	Hometown	Team
2	39	D	Peyton Kettles	Winnipeg	Pittsburgh
2	57	C	Matthew Gard	Winnipeg	Philadelphia
3	69	C	Hayden Paupanekis	Winnipeg	Montreal
3	92	C	Owen Martin	Oakbank	Winnipeg
6	170	G	Burke Hood	Brandon	NY Islanders



RINK
HOCKEY ACADEMY
An Unrivaled Hockey Academy Experience

RINK

Apply today
www.therink.ca

The VICTORIAS

WINNIPEG'S STANLEY CUP CHAMPIONS



The 1896 Stanley Cup champion Winnipeg Victorias: George Merritt (goal), Rod Flett (point), Fred Higginbotham (cover point), Charles Johnstone (cover point), Dan Bain (center), Jack Armytage (rover - Captain), Colin "Tote" Campbell (left wing), Tom "Attie" Howard (right wing), Bobby R. Benson (spare-left-right wing), Jack Sheppard (goal-played 1 regular season game), E.B. Nixon (President), Able Code (Vice President/Manager), J. Carter (Mascot/Trainer).

BY JOHN JAMESON
Photos courtesy of the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame and the Manitoba Indigenous Sports Hall of Fame

One of the many Easterners who migrated to Winnipeg in the latter part of the 19th century, was lawyer Patrick Anderson Macdonald, who had settled in the city in 1880.

In 1886, while on a visit to Montreal, MacDonald observed that organized hockey had captured the interest of Easterners. Hockey clubs and leagues had formed, and fans were packing the rinks, and paying, to watch.

A noted sports enthusiast, MacDonald returned to Winnipeg with the type of hockey stick used in the East. Local lumber merchant Brown & Rutherford copied the pattern to produce more sticks and that winter a few informal games were played on the Red River.

With no suitable hockey facility available the game struggled to catch on. Outdoor rinks were make-shift, leaving players and observers at the mercy of prairie winter conditions.

By 1890, the public was reading newspaper reports of the local hockey matches. On November 3, 1890, at the instigation of Jack Armytage, the Victoria Hockey Club was formed. A short time later Fred Ashe formed "The Winnipegs" followed by a third hockey club, organized by the Royal Canadian Dragoons, simply named "Fort Osborne".

On December 20, 1890, the first organized hockey game in Western Canada was played between the Victorias and the Winnipegs at the downtown outdoor Winnipeg Railway Rink. A sparse crowd paid 15 cents each to watch the Victorias post a 4-1 victory.

The game's early rules featured seven players to a team and no substitutes allowed except for injury. It was an onside game, meaning forward passes were illegal. Only lateral or back passing was allowed. If penalized, players were sent to the sidelines, or "on the fence" for a brief time.

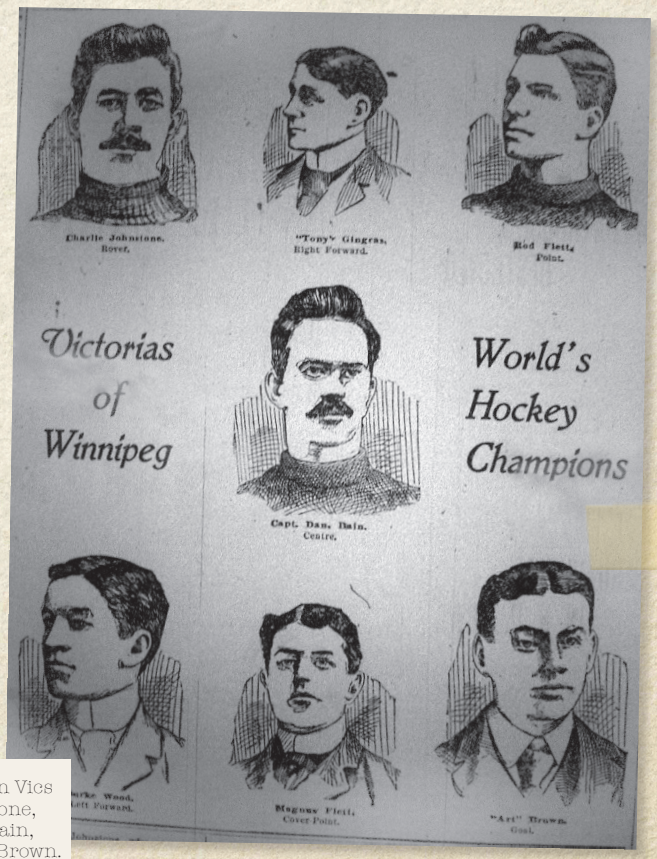
NEW RINKS AND THE ANDERSON CUP

It was not until 1887 that hockey was first played indoors, in a converted roller rink known as the Royal Rink. Soon, new indoor skating rinks were being built. The Manitoba and North West Senior Hockey Association was formed for the 1891-92 season with the majority of the games played at the Thistle Rink on Market Avenue just off Main Street. The T. A. Anderson Cup was introduced in 1892 as the first serious trophy. The Victorias would claim the Anderson Cup three years straight.

If one season marked the launch of hockey in Manitoba, it was in 1892-93. Hockey had taken off, and not only in the city, hockey clubs and hockey facilities were being established in rural communities across the province.

Confident it's talent could measure up against established Eastern clubs, an all-star team from Winnipeg's senior clubs traveled to Ontario and Quebec for a series of exhibition matches in February of 1893. The team returned home with a record of 8 wins and 3 losses, outscoring the opposition 71-37.

In January of 1895 the Vics would set out on their own eastern tour, outscoring their opponents 33-12 on their way to a record of 4-1.



The 1901 Stanley Cup champion Vics Starting Seven: Charlie Johnstone, Tony Gingras, Rod Flett, Dan Bain, Blake Wood, Magnus Flett, Art Brown.

It was after a 5-1 victory over the Montreal AAA club, Winnipeg Captain Jack Armytage visited the Montreal clubhouse and noticed a small rose bowl trophy. It was the newly minted Stanley Cup, donated by Lord Stanley of Preston, the sixth Governor General of Canada, for the amateur hockey championship of Canada.

The Cup, Armytage noted, was a challenge trophy. With confidence high from their eastern tour, Winnipeg challenged Montreal for the Stanley Cup. The Stanley Cup trustees accepted the challenge, and a "sudden death" game was scheduled for Feb. 14, 1896, at Montreal.

VICTORIAS WIN THE CUP

A skeptical Montreal crowd gathered that day, more out of curiosity than concern. "The blizzards from the land of the setting sun" however, stunned their hosts with a 2-0 victory. Armytage scored the winning goal for the new Stanley Cup champions while George (Whitey) Merritt, outstanding in goal for the winners, startled the Montreal crowd by wearing protective white cricket pads.

Winnipeggers gathered at a number of locations throughout the city and received the first ever play-by-play accounts of the Stanley Cup match via CPR Telegraph. They were soon rewarded with news of the victory.

The team returned on Feb. 24, to a mass display of civic pride and what is considered to be the first Stanley Cup parade. The Vics would enjoy the Stanley Cup for 10 months before accepting a challenge from the same Montreal squad for Dec. 30, 1896, in Winnipeg.

The highly anticipated match took place at the McIntyre Rink on Albert Street. Ticket prices were astronomical for the time, ranging between $6.50 and a hefty $15.00 ($575 today), with crowds standing in line for long hours in the cold hoping for a ticket. Despite home-ice advantage, a capacity crowd watched the determined Montreal seven come from behind to win 6-5 and reclaim the Stanley Cup.

The Victorias were Western Canada's finest hockey team. The city's top young athletes, like Donald "Dan" Bain, Jack Armytage, and A.T. Howard were determined to showcase Winnipeg as a city capable of producing top-level athletes. The game's popularity had exploded and by the 1898-99 season there were well over a hundred teams in Winnipeg alone.

Challenging Montreal Victorias for the Cup in 1899, the series was set as a best-of-three for the first time. In the opening game, Bain was struck above the eye and forced to leave the match and the Vics would lose 2-1. With Bain sidelined, the Vics' relied on winger Tony Gingras, a Métis player from St. Boniface known for his toughness and scoring touch.

Gingras had picked up the first goal in game one and was leading the Winnipeg offence in the second game when Montreal's Bob McDougall viciously slashed him across the knee, injuring him. When referee J.A. "Bill" Findlay only issued a minor penalty — despite McDougall admitting the slash was intentional — Winnipeg left the ice in protest, and the game was forfeited to Montreal.

In 1900, the Victorias challenged again, this time facing the Montreal Shamrocks in a three-game series. The Vics pushed it to a deciding third game, falling 5-4.

The Vics were now battle-tested with Burke Wood, a former Shamrock winger, joining the fold. Bain was back as captain, Gingras was healthy, and the defense was bolstered by the addition of two more Metis players, Rod and Magnus Flett (Gingras and Rod and Magnus Flett are also honoured members of the Manitoba Indigenous Sports Hall of Fame).





Victorias Captain Dan Bain hockey card



The 1900-01 Winnipeg Victorias

VICS WIN CUP AGAIN

Their persistence paid off in 1901 in a rematch against the Shamrocks. The Victorias opened the series with a 4-3 victory with Wood scoring two goals against his former team. The second game ended in a 1-1 tie after regulation. In the extra period, Bain took the puck on a rush, skated the length of the ice, and scored the first overtime goal in Stanley Cup history. The Cup returned to Winnipeg.

In 1902, the Vics successfully defended the Cup at home against the Toronto Wellingtons with back-to-back 5-3 victories. Later that year, they would lose the Cup on home ice to the Montreal AAA in a three-game series.

In 1903, the Victorias challenged Montreal AAA once more. By then, many of the Vic's old stars had called it a day including Dan Bain, but the Vics would extend the series to four games — one tied, one Winnipeg win, and two Montreal victories. The last match ended in a 4-1 defeat. It was the Victorias final Stanley Cup appearance.

By then, new and larger facilities were being built across the country. Increased attendance meant more money to entice players, and Eastern clubs were paying top dollar for talent. The players, in turn, were aware that their services were in high demand. As early as 1903, Manitobans had been lured to professional hockey leagues in the United States.

Across Canada, the issue of payments was causing a rift in the amateur hockey community as many felt the game would be soiled by implementing "professionalism". The reality was that many of the best players had been paid under the table for some time to retain their amateur status. Manitoba teams couldn't match the financial firepower of the East. By the time the Winnipeg Maple Leafs lost a 1908 challenge for the Cup, it was clear the golden age of prairie hockey was over.

For many years, amateurism remained a central ideal in Canadian sport, and the Victorias embodied this principle in both play and conduct. Turning their backs on the professional game, the team would continue to compete in elite amateur circles claiming the newly-minted Allan Cup, awarded to Canada's top amateur team, in 1911 and 1912.

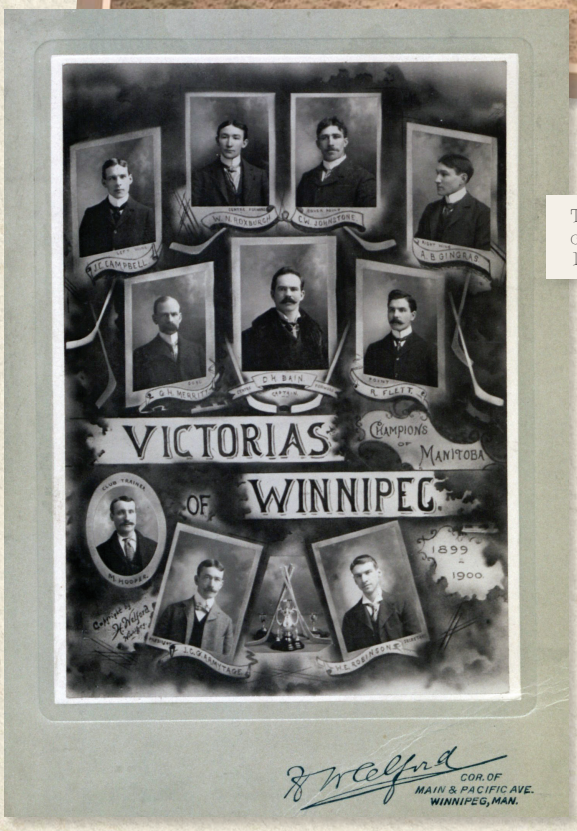
In total, the Winnipeg Victorias appeared in eight Stanley Cup challenges between 1896 and 1903, claiming the Cup three times. In the first 10 years of Stanley Cup competition, Winnipeg was the only city other than Montreal to win the coveted trophy.

Winnipeg Victorias would help shape the modern game and inspire generations of Canadian hockey players. Their garnet jerseys may have faded into history, but their legacy will be acknowledged in the Fall, 2025. The Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame will be honouring the Victorias legacy with a mural on the south-facing wall of the former Bank of British North America at 436 Main Street.

Resource: "An Immense Hold in the Public Estimation:" The First Quarter Century of Hockey in Manitoba, 1886-1911. by Morris Mott

1911 Winnipeg Victorias





The Victorias of Winnipeg, champions of Manitoba 1899 and 1900



PILOTMOUNDHOCKEYACADEMY.COM

COLE LANDREVILLE



BY JOHNSTON HALL
Photos by Darryl Gershman, Anne Leslie and Andrii Knyhnytskyi

PMHA BUFFALOES

You get THERE from here

For the PMHA Buffaloes, this was a banner year at the Western Hockey League Draft. Not one, not two, but four members of the Buffaloes U15 Prep squad were selected by WHL teams.

Cole Landreville was selected in the second round (25th overall) by the Edmonton Oil Kings, Maddox Ramage went to the Swift Current Broncos in the sixth round (125th overall), Brett Buors was selected in the seventh round (155th overall) by the Prince George Cougars, and Gavin Hildebrand was chosen in the 11th round (231st overall) by the Penticton Vees.

These selections were not surprising to coaches Colin Fafara and Brad Platt. In fact, as early as January 2025, Fafara told Game On that "... while I'd never guarantee it, I do believe all four of these players will be selected in the WHL Draft."

When you toss in the fact that PMHA's Benson Hirst moved on from the program at mid-season in order to help the Northern Manitoba Blizzard win the Manitoba Junior Hockey League and Provincial Jr. A championship; PMHA Alumnus Carson Carels captained U18 Team Canada to the IIHF World Championships in Texas this past spring; and the Buffaloes' Male U17 Prep team won the 2025 CSSHL U17 Prep Tier II Championship by defeating the North Shore Warriors 7-0 in the final game, it can definitely be considered a superb 2024-25 season in the small, friendly, hockey-loving Western Manitoba town.

This year's WHL draft was, of course, an important moment for the players and their families, but it was also important to the people who coach and work behind the scenes at Pilot Mound Hockey Academy. There has been a lot of hard work and sacrifice expended to make PMHA one of the top prep hockey schools in Western Canada and a leader among members of the CSSHL.

These four selections reflect the dedication and commitment by everyone at Pilot Mound to turn out outstanding hockey players and, more importantly, outstanding young people.

But why Pilot Mound? Why would you want to send your hockey playing son or daughter to a small school in the Southwestern part of rural Manitoba?

Well, with the help of Pilot Mound's local newspaper, The Hometown View, we offer you some reasons, from the four players and their families, as to why Pilot Mound is such an outstanding place to play.



GAVIN HILDEBRAND

G // 2010 // 5'10" 145 POUNDS // MORDEN

"I am incredibly honoured and grateful to have been drafted to the WHL 's Penticton Vees," Gavin said. "I want to thank my family, my coaches from Morden Minor Hockey and Pilot Mound Hockey Academy, goalie coach Tim Morison and my teammates for always believing in me and pushing me to put in the hard work. This is just the beginning of the next step in my hockey career, and I am thankful to Pilot Mound Hockey Academy for preparing me so well these past 2 years.

"The Academy's routine of education, daily practice and workouts, as well as the opportunity to live with my teammates has taken my game to the next level."

THE HILDEBRAND FAMILY

"It has been an exciting journey watching Gavin's progress," said his mom. "As parents, it's a tough choice to have your 13-year-old move away from home to play as a minor in U15 Prep hockey travelling across Western Canada, but it was a great decision for him as he is always looking for the next challenge.

"The community, school, academy staff and coaches immediately welcomed him and have spent the last two seasons refining the talent that so many coaches have built up over the years. We are cheering you on every game, every save and every step of the way. We would also like to congratulate all four student athletes from PMHA on being drafted to the WHL. We are proud of your hard work and journey."

PILOT MOUND BUFFALOES

PILOTMOUNDHOCKEYACADEMY.COM

COLE LANDREVILLE

F // 2010 // 5'7" 130 POUNDS // ST. CLAUDE

"Getting drafted was a great accomplishment for me, however I couldn't have done it without the people around me and the Buffaloes Academy," Cole said. "I'd first like to thank my coaches Colin and Brad who pushed me and not only made me a better player, but a better person as well. Secondly, I'd like to thank Anthony, our trainer, for making me work hard in the gym and helping me get stronger and faster. Lastly, thanks to my teammates for a good fun year where everyone worked hard and played as a team.

"Coming to Pilot Mound to play for the Buffaloes was the greatest decision of my life. I learned so much from being here and my hometown is a small community just like Pilot Mound. Being here at Pilot Mound, you learn a lot of useful responsibilities because you are away from home; all that has helped me get to the next level. I'd like to thank the whole Pilot Mound organization and the community."

CHRYSTAL LANDREVILLE

"We have been fortunate to be involved in watching Cole set goals for himself and watch his aspirations come true through his hard work and dedication," she said.

"We have seen him thrive at Pilot Mound, doing what he loves every day. There have been many individuals who have helped his success along the way. Colin, Brad and Tyson have been phenomenal coaches, helping him not only with hockey skills, but life skills. Anthony has been great in giving him the tools he needs for strength and training. All these individuals have pushed him to reach his full potential. Teammates who have become like family have helped Cole get to where he is, offering encouragement



and support. The Pilot Mound Hockey Academy staff and dorm parents play instrumental roles in caring for the players. Pilot Mound is a great community that backs their athletes."

MADDOX RAMAGE

F // 2010 // 6'0" 160 LBS // PILOT MOUND

"Playing at PMHA is everything I thought it would be," Maddox said. "It's been awesome. The development here is crazy good. The people are so respectful, the staff is great, it's just awesome. I want to stick around for a few more years and see where hockey can take me. I'm committed to Pilot Mound. The school is really good, the coaches are awesome."

AIMEE & NATHAN RAMAGE

"These last two years at the Pilot Mound Hockey Academy have been truly transformative for Maddox," said Nathan. "It's been a place where he has not only honed his skills on the ice but has also grown immensely as a young man. The dedicated coaches and supportive environment at Pilot Mound have fostered in him a new level of success and, just as importantly, a deep sense of confidence in his abilities.

"During his time with the Pilot Mound Academy U15 Prep team, we've watched him flourish. It's been a journey paved with an incredible amount of hard work and unwavering dedication from Maddox. Countless hours of practice, early mornings, late nights, and a true commitment to his craft have all led to this moment. To see Maddox drafted is a wonderful recognition of his passion and effort. We are so grateful to everyone at the Pilot Mound Hockey Academy.



BRETT BUORS

D // 2010 // 6'2" 170 LBS // NIVERVILLE

"This year so many people helped me accomplish this goal of getting drafted into the WHL," Brett said. "Without them and my team I wouldn't have improved and had fun while doing it with them. The workouts and the practices were all worth it. My coaches Colin and Brad were always helping me and giving me feedback on mistakes. They always gave me the opportunities I needed to grow as a player and be more confident on the ice. The Academy helped build my character by making sure I kept a clean room, kept me in check with school and helped all of us maintain a clean, nice facility.



"My parents are my biggest help. Dad has always given me tips and tricks to help improve. He gave me a lot of encouragement, confidence and never made me feel down on myself. Mom has always been so supportive.

This year was such a memorable year, and I really enjoyed and I appreciate what the academy has done."

THE BUORS FAMILY

"All of Brett's hard work and dedication paid off," said his dad. "We made the best decision in sending our son to Pilot Mound Hockey Academy. He felt at home and was provided with strong support, proper nutrition and time management while living at the dorms.

"The exposure to the higher level of hockey of CSSHL is also what we wanted for Brett as he needed more of a challenge. The full focus from his coaches Colin and Brad is exactly what we wanted for his development including the one-on-one teachings. Pilot Mound Collegiate's ability to accommodate the Academy students is above and beyond. Principal Nathan Ramage and the staff did an amazing job."

PILOTMOUNDHOCKEYACADEMY.COM

WESTERN MARBLE GRANITE & TILE:

We're building more than just beautiful surfaces. We're investing in young hockey dreams.

In Manitoba's dynamic landscape, Western Marble Granite & Tile stands as a pillar of quality and craftsmanship, renowned for providing premium stone surfaces that elevate homes and businesses.

However, beyond their commitment to exceptional materials and design, the company, under the leadership of President and CEO Jeremy Mathison, harbours a deep-seated passion for community enrichment, particularly within the realm of youth hockey.

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

Manitoba's Most Trusted Experts for Marble, Granite & Tile for Nearly 50 Years

Stone for the modern age

Business is rock-solid for Western Marble, Granite & Tile, which laid its foundation in 1977 as a small family-run business. Since 2013, the company has flourished under new owners, who are proud to maintain its personal approach to doing business. With its continuous growth, comes a new showroom and indoor warehouse. This new showroom allows customers to shop for materials in comfort with the use of state-of the-art technology to see their project come to life! The production facility has expanded, allowing its industry-leading turnaround time and quality to increase and improve even more. Offering one of the largest showrooms in Manitoba, the space is stacked with display racks. Stone samples are available for customers to sign out and take home. That way, clients can see first-hand how the selection will look under their own lighting and in their own space. For added convenience, hundreds of tile sample boards can also be signed out and returned. The showroom features a computer station where customers can browse an extensive inventory and receive a 3-D rendering of their project. As well, customers can browse through thousands of in-stock granite slabs, which are all entirely unique in flow, grain and colour.

Love your home

Western Marble, Granite & Tile offers an extensive selection of high-quality options for clients looking for granite, quartz, marble, tile, Schluter systems, faucets and sinks. To ensure that customers can achieve their dream designs, the staff will search for durable materials through expansive connections with industry suppliers around the world. Many clients opt to go the extra mile by installing granite in their showers, fireplace areas and hot-tub surrounds. The company is pleased to provide granite for any flat surface, including dinner tables, baseboards, window sills, stairs and much more. Western Marble, Granite & Tile strives to customize solid stone through the manufacturing process to fit unique projects, even the most creative designs. At the same time, the company can also complete multiple orders of the same measurements, such as kitchen countertops for condo projects. From assisting you in finding the perfect stone to installing your finished projects, you are always in good hands with Western Marble, Granite & Tile.

Western Marble, Granite & Tile is Proud to Support Manitoba Hockey!



WMGT

WESTERN MARBLE GRANITE & TILE

Unit 1-1108 St. James St.
Winnipeg, MB R3H 0K5
P: 204-774-0537 Ext.115
W: www.wmgt.ca

BAEUMLER APPROVED

NATURAL STONE INSTITUTE MEMBER



TESTING THE WATERS (AND BUNKERS)

In late-August, Winnipeg Jets backup goaltender Eric Comrie had the opportunity for another 'welcome to the big leagues' moment. Having now played professional hockey for 10 years, the 30-year-old Alberta-born hockey player traded in his sticks and pads for clubs and ball markers, as he teed off in the 2025 Manitoba Open from Breezy Bend Golf and Country Club.

Yes, Comrie was given the chance to suit up and play alongside some of the best golfers out there as a sponsor's exemption - meaning he, as an amateur, could play two rounds with professionals. And due to inclement weather, the tournament became a two-day weekend spectacle, so he played the full event. Comrie's invite was solely based on the event sponsorship through True North Sports + Entertainment and had nothing to do with his skillset.

"It was fantastic, I had a lot of fun," Comrie said. "You get an appreciation for how good the guys are out here; they're unbelievable. They hit it right where they want it every single time. I had a lot of fun."

Fun was certainly the name of the game for Comrie, who picked up golf roughly eight years ago. He finished dead last in the field with a 42-over 184 through both rounds (96, 88).

"This summer has been a rough summer for golf," Comrie said, like a true pro. "Golf is one of those games that comes and goes. I have two kids now, it's hard to get out and practice as much as I used to. It's harder to work on chipping and touch shots. It's a game where if you don't play it a lot, it's hard to get good. Realistically, I haven't had a very good summer of golf, but I did the best I could for the week I had."

Over the past number of years, other members of the Jets have participated in the event, including most recently, Dylan Samberg, who shot just 10-over last year. Mark Scheifele's 18-over in 2022 was the previous best, while Morgan Barron went +22 in 2023. Only Kyle Connor's +43 in 2019 was worse than Comrie's performance.

"I'm the first Jet to play the weekend and not the highest scoring Jet of all time either!"

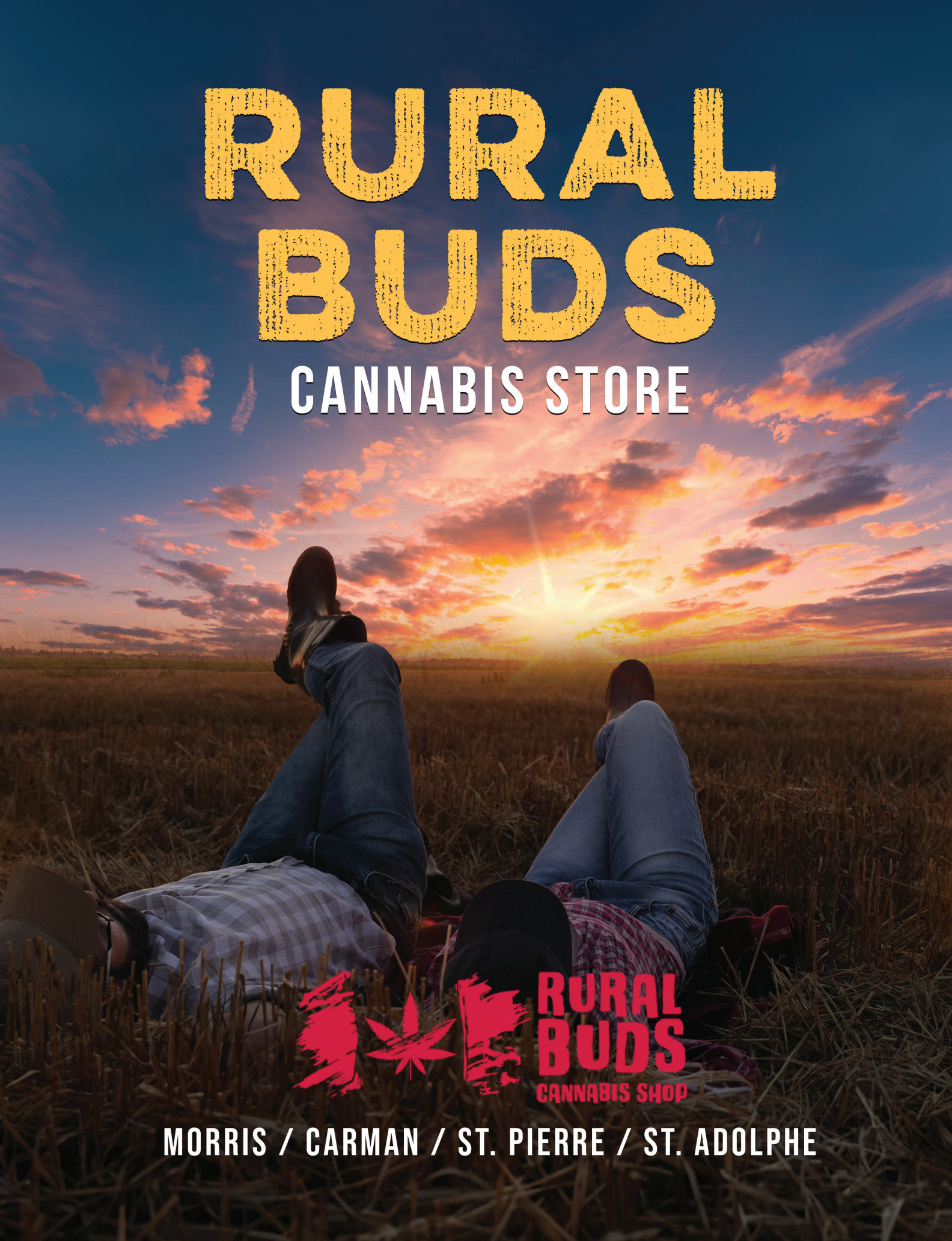








Photos by Rusty Barton


RURAL
BUDS
CANNABIS STORE
RURAL
BUDS
CANNABIS SHOP
MORRIS / CARMAN / ST. PIERRE / ST. ADOLPHE

STARTING FROM THE LOW $500'S



BUILDING TRUST SINCE 1983

OWN IT...

Your Space...Your Style...

YOUR NEW HOME

RANDALL HOMES

Check us out
www.randallhomes.net