

NGHA Annual General Meeting

Date: June 9th, 2025

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Walter Baker Recreation Centre Cafeteria

Board Members Present: Claire Bellefeuille, Kim Leclair, Eric Pickering, Lisa Camilucci, Rob Mohoney, Rob Sample; Lindsay Whitmore, Lisa Tizzard, Shawn Roussy, Glenn Burrows

Board Members Absent: Estelle Mandonca and Tracy Foster

Agenda for AGM

- 1. Call to Order** – President
- 2. Presentation and adoption of the minutes of the 2023-24 Annual General Meeting**
 - Proposed by Lisa Camilucci and seconded by Rob Mahoney. Adopted.
- 3. Presentation of the Les Banks Bursary**

This bursary award is in honour of Les Banks, who dedicated many years of service to the NGHA at both the team and executive levels. Les served on the NGHA executive in various positions for over a decade and was always ready to help out in any way he could. Les has also been recognized in the community for his extensive volunteering efforts.

This bursary recognizes a graduating player who is advancing to college or university to pursue their academics. Applicants were required to provide personal letters that describe why they believe they are deserving of the bursary by outlining how they give back to their community, and what volunteering means to them. The successful applicant best exemplifies outstanding volunteerism, community participation and leadership.

The winner of this year's bursary not only demonstrated how deserving they were in their letter, but they also submitted over 550 volunteer hours during their time as a Wildcat - both through volunteer work directly with the Wildcats and also outside of hockey. They truly embody the spirit of this bursary.

We are pleased to announce that the recipient of the 2025 Les Banks Bursary is: Aly Richer.

- 4. Presentation of the Mary Lou Zywicki Bursaries**

This bursary award is in honour of Mary Lou Zywicki, who dedicated many years of service to girls' hockey at both the team and executive levels. She was instrumental in developing the original NGHA website.

This bursary recognizes players who are advancing to a college or university to pursue their academics. These players exemplify sportsmanship and fair play, personal contribution to their teams and the NGHA and show ambition and direction in achieving their life goals.

Applicants were required to provide personal letters that outline these qualities, which were then anonymized before being evaluated by a selection committee. Applicants were also required to submit their grades, number of volunteer hours, and two letters of recommendation from past and current coaches.

Special thank you to our selection committee members - Susan Amadio, Nicholas Sunderland, Lina Campbell, Dave Doran and Kristin Cutts.

Pleased to announce we have four recipients this year - Jasmine Wheatley, Addison Ramsey, Olivia Morreau and Aly Richer. Congratulations to all of you.

5. VP Finance

We now have the past two years of financial statements finalized. We are currently working on the review of the financial statements for the year ending April 30th, 2025.

Looking at April 30th, 2024 financial statements, we are in good financial health and have a healthy amount in the bank. (I don't think I mentioned how much we have in the bank account. If I did, I would have said around \$600K)

If you have any questions on the 2023 and 2024 financial statements let me know. The past treasurer Ray Murphy has helped a lot on getting these complete. He is also helping with the bookkeeping and completion of the 2025 financial statements.

In the past two years, registrations have been up and this can be seen in registration revenue increasing slightly in the past two years. Ice costs have increased each year. This is normal as the city increase the cost each year and NGHA always trying to get more ice.

No increase in league fees for 2025/2026 season.

6. President's Address

It is an honor to stand before you tonight as we close out another successful season and reflect on the past three years of our incredible hockey community. Serving as President of the Nepean Girls Hockey Association has been both a privilege and a challenge, but above all, it has been a deeply rewarding experience.

When I stepped into this role, we, as a board, recognized the need for change. We knew that communication needed to improve, that our processes needed to be more efficient, and that our players—your daughters—deserved better development opportunities without financial barriers. Over the past three years, we have worked tirelessly to make those changes a reality.

We launched a development program that has been nothing short of exceptional—affordable, accessible, and most importantly, impactful. The results have spoken for themselves in the skill and confidence of our players. Tonight, our Vice President of Programs will speak to the success of that initiative, but I want to acknowledge how proud I am that we made this a priority.

We also introduced Wildcats Day—our first-ever association-wide celebration of our players, teams, and community. It was a massive undertaking, and thanks to the vision and hard work of our board and volunteers, it was a resounding success. Our Director of Administration will share more on that, but I know this event will become a lasting tradition that strengthens our sense of belonging in this hockey family.

Through it all, we have remained one of the largest female hockey associations in the province, putting nearly 1,000 players on the ice every season across more than 50 teams. That is no small feat. It requires an incredible amount of coordination, dedication, and commitment from our coaches, volunteers, and board members. And let me be clear—this association does not run without them.

But we have done more than just keep the lights on. We have given back. Our players, teams, and families have raised thousands of dollars for important causes like Do It For Daron and The Snowsuit Fund. We are not just building hockey players—we are building strong, compassionate young women who understand the value of community.

We have also worked hard behind the scenes to correct administrative and budgetary gaps that

predated this board's tenure. These were not glamorous tasks, but they were necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of our association. I am proud to say that NGHHA is in a stronger, more stable place today because of the commitment and diligence of this board.

But as much as I would love to stand here and simply celebrate our progress, I cannot ignore a growing problem—one that has worsened every single season. And I would be failing all of you, and most importantly, the players, if I didn't address it.

Hockey is being ruined—not by the players, not by the officials, not by the coaches—but by the parents.

Over the past three years, we have seen an alarming rise in entitled, unkind, uninformed, and hyper-critical behavior from parents. This behavior is driving away the very people who make this sport possible.

This is why we are losing coaches. Every year, incredible, dedicated individuals step up to volunteer their time, only to be berated, second-guessed, and disrespected. Every year, we lose them, and every year, it gets harder to find new ones.

This is why we have a serious shortage of officials. Who would want to step onto the ice and endure the relentless criticism and abuse that has become commonplace? Without officials, there is no game.

This is why board members, who dedicate countless hours to ensure this association runs smoothly, are burning out. When volunteer board members—who are doing this because they love the game and want to create opportunities for young athletes—are met with hostility and attacks, it becomes impossible to continue.

But most tragically, this is why we are failing the very people we are supposed to be here for—the players. The stress, the pressure, and the toxicity from adults are taking away their love of the game. It is heartbreaking to hear players talk about how much they hate the drama and negativity that surrounds them.

If we do not change, if we do not demand better from ourselves, we will lose what makes this sport great.

So, I am asking—no, I am pleading—with everyone in this room: Be better. Be kinder. Be respectful. If you don't understand a decision, ask instead of attack. If you have a concern, raise it in a constructive way. If you want change, step up and help. Because if we continue down this path, there won't be anyone left to coach, to officiate, or to run this association. And worst of all, our daughters will be the ones who suffer.

Despite these challenges, I still believe in this community. I still believe in what we have built together. And I still believe in the power of sport to shape strong, resilient young women.

I want to take a moment to thank every single volunteer, every coach, every team manager, and every board member who has worked tirelessly to make this association what it is. Your dedication does not go unnoticed, and it does not go unappreciated. You are the reason we are still here.

As my time as President comes to an end, I leave with immense gratitude for having had the opportunity to serve this incredible association. I leave with hope that the work we have done will continue. And I leave with one final request—that we all remember why we are here.

It's not for us. It's not for our egos. It's for the players. Let's do better. Let's be better. For them.

7. Reports from VPs, Directors and Committees

• VP Programs

This past season has largely been one of catching up. For several years, programming within the NGHA had been stagnant—some initiatives had even come to a complete halt. Over the past year, we've made significant progress in restarting, renewing, and strengthening our programs, with an eye on long-term sustainability.

New Initiatives

One of the most exciting additions this season was the launch of our **Mentorship Program**, which has gained great momentum. We are proud of the strong engagement so far and look forward to building on that next season.

We also hosted our first-ever **Wildcat Day**, a celebration of team spirit and community. With the theme "*Cats Giving Back*," we brought together most of our Competitive Teams—and several House League teams—for a day of friendly games and fundraising at Minto Sportsplex. Thanks to everyone's support, we collected a large number of snowsuits and raised over \$1,500 for the Ottawa Snowsuit Fund. We're planning to expand this event next year to involve more teams and both ice pads at Minto.

Partnerships and Member Benefits

We've renewed several key partnerships for the upcoming season, which provide meaningful benefits to our membership. These include:

- Skate sharpening discounts through **B-Sharp**
- Access to the **CoachThem** platform for coaches
- **Pro Hockey Life** discount cards for families

These are small but important ways we're adding value to the experience for both players and parents.

Player and Goalie Development

This season saw a major boost in development opportunities across all levels.

We ran regular after-school skating and skills sessions for both Competitive and House League players, and enhanced ice utilization by partnering with **Apex Hockey** for in-practice skills sessions, particularly during goalie ice times.

Our **Ashley Holmes skating sessions**, offered weekly for both Competitive and House League, were consistently at or near capacity, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

This was also our "**Year of the Goalie.**" Recognizing ongoing concerns around goalie development, we implemented several targeted initiatives:

- Maintained a dedicated goalie development budget
- Partnered with **Amped Hockey** for in-practice goalie-specific sessions (5 per team)
- Offered additional goalie-only sessions monthly across age groups
- Secured a 15% discount at Amped for families seeking extra training

While attendance and engagement were strong, we also experienced some frustration—particularly seeing goalie families take advantage of these new offerings and then transfer to other associations. Unfortunately, this is part of a broader trend in girls' hockey, where player movement is increasingly common. It's disheartening, but it won't stop us from continuing to invest in our players.

Looking Ahead

We've made meaningful progress this season and plan to continue the majority of the programs mentioned tonight into next year. We're also open to exploring new ideas and initiatives that our members may be passionate about. That said, for any program to succeed, we need people to lead and support it. Instead of hearing only what could be better, we

encourage our members to bring forward solutions—and the willingness to help put them into action. As we look to next season, we're committed to building, improving, and evolving—but we can't do it alone. We need the active support and involvement of our membership to make these initiatives a reality.

Thank you to everyone—volunteers, coaches, board members, and families—who made this year possible. Your efforts are helping us move the NGHHA forward in a meaningful way.

- **VP Operations**

- **Timekeepers / Referees**

- We thank Drew MacLean for completing his first year as Head Timekeeper. It was a successful year with timekeepers being provided for both Competitive and House League programs. This is something that is not only beneficial to our association but also gives young people in our community with part time jobs. Currently we have enough timekeepers but will re-evaluate again in September.

- Our referee situation seemed to be pretty good this season with minimal games needing to be rescheduled. We will continue to try and not book league games on weekends when we know there are local tournaments taking place.

- **Ice Scheduling**

- Our ice schedule, Jamie Leppard, is probably the best in the city. He works tirelessly to help make sure everyone gets the ice they need to have a successful season. He is always looking to save us money and works to decrease private ice and acquire more city ice. City ice costs were approximately \$700K this year and private ice was approximately \$147K with the majority of it being at Carleton University. Thank you Jamie for your continued support and dedication, it is greatly appreciated.

- **NGHA DIFD Tournament**

- We had another successful year with our tournaments. This season we had 78 house league teams and 131 competitive teams compete over the course of two weekends. Big thanks to Katie Bertrand for being our Tournament Director and taking on this role. We thank all our volunteers who contribute their time over these weekends and throughout the year, we can't do it without them. This past season the NGHHA raised and donated \$10,000 for DIFD.

- **House League Directors**

- We'd like to start off by thanking all our coaches. Our house league program is lucky to have such amazing coaches - they are dedicated volunteers who put an incredible amount of time and effort into creating welcoming and inclusive environments for all their players, regardless of their skill level. We have some coaches who have returned to us year after year, some have been coaches in our house league program for nearly a decade, and we're truly grateful for all that they do for our players.

- We want to also extend our gratitude to our wonderful house league convenors - **Jessica Caldbick (U9), Shannon Quinlan-Steele (U11), Alex Major (U13), Susan Amadio (U15) and Diane Chea (U18)**. They are an incredible group of dedicated volunteers who put hours and hours of their own time into making sure the season runs smoothly for their respective divisions. From approving budgets, to assisting with affiliation requests, to generally being available to answer any questions from coaches, managers and parents, as soon as they arise, they are an amazing group of hard-working, caring volunteers. We would not be able to run our program without them.

- I would like to also share a personal heart-felt thank you to **Tracy Foster**, who is stepping down after two terms as HL director. Your hard work and support has been incredible, and I hope you know you aren't getting away that easily! We'll gladly look to you for your continued

help and guidance in the seasons to come!

House League Update

This year, we saw continued growth in our HL registration numbers. The biggest increase was at the U13 level - where we were able to make seven teams for the first time since before the pandemic. Before 2020, we regularly had 8 house league teams at most levels, so it's great that we are finally starting to get closer to those numbers. It's evident that the interest in girls' hockey is growing, and the biggest increase is happening at the younger levels. This is encouraging.

Our house league teams had some success at tournaments this year - our Wildcats brought back two gold medals, one silver medal, and one bronze, with many of our teams advancing to the quarter-final and semi-final in the tournaments they participated in. This included our own DIFD tournament this year - it was especially exciting to have two of our U13 teams face off in the gold medal game.

We capped off our season with a successful Championship Weekend. 56 games in total were played across all divisions.

We continued our partnership with Kanata's house league program that included regular season game play between both associations at every level, capped off with an exciting grand final championship from U11 to U18. We plan to continue with this program into next season.

We increased development opportunities for players and goalies outside of their own teams' ice times and will plan to continue to expand on this in the upcoming season. We hope to focus more efforts towards goalie development at the house league level next season, especially at the lower levels where there is a greater need for more goalies.

Looking ahead to the 2025-2026 season, we're excited to be spearheading a new U22 house league division. This is something that has been in the works for some time, with players and parents regularly expressing their desire to continue playing beyond U18. A couple of months ago, we put out an initial survey to gauge interest, and the response was overwhelmingly positive, from both house league and competitive players. We're excited to be moving forward with our inaugural season in September.

- **Competitive Directors**

The Directors thanked everyone involved in helping to run the competitive program; from head coaches to bench staff to den moms. They acknowledged the amount of work that goes into running a team and noted there is rarely a shortage of volunteers, which is a tribute to the parents supporting this girls hockey association.

In 2024-25 the NGHA put 21 competitive teams on the ice. This will be expanding to 22 team for the 2025-26 season.

This past year saw a lot of tournament success, which included:

- 14 tournament gold medals – including five DIFD wins;
- 17 tournament silver medals;
- one City Championship (U13-BB); and,
- two Provincial Championships (U13-AA and U13-A).

Looking ahead to the 2025-26 season; competitive tryouts are complete with 21 teams selected. We will be offering an extra U18 team. U-9 tryouts will take place later in the summer.

- **Director of Policy, Risk and Safety**

The main goal for year one was to do a review of all the policies and prioritize changes.

As a member of OWHA, NGHA members will at all times adhere to the OWHA policies and procedures. If the posted NGHA policies differ from OWHA policies, the OWHA policy will take precedence.

The policies outlined on this website are specific to NGHA. While the association strives to have consistency across policies, differences may occur as individual policies evolve. Where there are differences, the most recent policy will be followed while the older policy is updated.

Special thanks to Julian Webb and Laura Reid who were made up the newly formed 'Policy Subcommittee'. Hoping next year we have some HL representation.

New policy:

- Hazing

Updated policies:

- Competitive Team Formation
- Permission to Tryout and Release
- Use of Social Media
- Suspension Policy
- Sponsorship and Fundraising
- Refund

Policies under review:

- Competitive Team Affiliation
- Financial Assistance

- **Director of Administration**

Banners

Coordinating with Minto Rec. Centre to have a drop-off bin for teams to deliver them by the end of June so they can be hung up over the summer.

Ice Logo

Working with the City to have the Wildcats logo put on one of the pads at Minto for one year for free. Will need funding for the logo to be printed. Awaiting cost and will submit funding request to the Board once known.

Wildcats Day

- Will be at the end of October (no firm date yet).
- Have both rinks at Minto booked for House and Competitive.
- Looking to collaborate with Ottawa Bandits to have them do a puck drop, provide them with a Wildcats jersey and make their puck drop player an 'honorary Wildcat'. In addition, we will do a fun Wildcats vs. Bandits game during the midday break.
- Considering a 'parent celebration' in a hall where they can, for a cover charge fee, relax and have a drink. Proceeds would go to the Ottawa Bandits. Liquor license required.
- Will need funding for posters, music, balloon arches. Once know a funding request will be made to the Board.
- City will not approve food trucks.
- Will invite teams to have a table where they can do one of their fundraisers.

8. Leaving the Board (tribute from Eric Pickering)

For four of our Board members, today marks a long-awaited milestone. I'm going to take a wild guess and assume each of you first joined the Board by being '*voluntold*', and thankfully for the sake of this Association, you all said yes!

In today's "What have you done for me now?" era, stepping into a youth sport executive role, especially within a minor hockey association, is no small task. It's overwhelming, stressful, time-consuming, and often thankless. I don't want to scare off our newest appointees (it *is* a great experience, I promise!), but let's not sugarcoat it: managing your own family's hockey schedule is tough enough, now multiply that by over 850 members. That's the level of commitment we're talking about.

Our Board may be small, but we face an ever-changing hockey landscape: new teams emerging and pulling our players away, parents with increasingly high (and sometimes unreachable) expectations, and the OWHA throwing us last-minute curveballs that require immediate response. Despite all this, the four of you have faced these challenges with professionalism, resilience, and heart. You should be proud.

Tracy Foster, you've served as House League Director for over four years. From countless hours at Minto Sportsplex managing team sort-outs, to being a steady presence at DIFD tournament games, to organizing jerseys at Dymon Storage—you've been a cornerstone of our house league operations. And that's just what we *can* see. Thank you for your tireless work, your dedication, and the many behind-the-scenes tasks you've taken on without complaint.

Rob Mahoney, I first met you during the COVID year—masks on, silently nodding as our teams passed each other during health checks. We didn't speak then, but once I joined the Board three years ago, we connected quickly. You've been my go-to, and I've affectionately called you the "Velvet Hammer"—firm, honest, but always with grace. Your willingness to say the hard things others avoid, and your tireless effort getting the competitive season ready, made a huge impact. Thank you, Rob, for your strength, your candor, and your commitment.

Kim Leclair, you are the very definition of professionalism. We first connected when I was coaching and you were Comp Director - fast, responsive, and always efficient. When I joined the Board, I saw just how much you did, which was often the work of two people. As VP of Operations and Programs, you quietly kept the train on the tracks. So many problems never made it to our plates because you were already handling them. Thank you for your quiet strength, your reliability, and your immense contribution to the NGHA.

Claire Bellefeuille, five years; two in Policy and three as President. I still remember when you asked, "Should I run for Prez? Chad thinks I'd be good at it." I said, "Hell yes! Go for it!" I had no idea what I was unleashing on you! Managing the logistics for just *one* team is overwhelming; gender ID, Respect in Sport, police checks, certifications... Now multiply that by 50 teams, each with its own unique needs. Add six Associations asking for updates, and of course, OWHA - who usually only contacts us when something goes wrong. Through it all, you held it together.

What kept us going was the sight of those pink helmets at Fundamentals on Saturday mornings. That, right there, is what it's all about. You've enabled so many kids to play the game they love, and your wealth of knowledge—your "encyclopedia" brain—on OWHA and NGHA matters will be missed dearly. Thank you, Claire, for your leadership, your sacrifice, and your unshakable passion.

9. Election of Officers and Directors

- None

10. Adjournment – 7:45.

Elections

Votes will not be required as the following positions have been acclaimed:

- President – Lisa Tizzard
- Competitive Director 2 – Tara McCallum

- House League Director 2 – Shannon Steele

The following positions were not up for election:

- Vice President, Programs (Eric Pickering)
- Vice President, Finance (Shawn Roussy)
- Competitive Director 1 (Rob Sample)
- House League Director 1 (Lisa Camilucci)
- Director Policy, Risk and Player Safety (Lindsay Whitmore)
- Director, Administration (Estelle Mendonca)
- Secretary (Glenn Burrows)

The following positions remain vacant and will be voted in for a one-year term by the Board at a later date:

- Vice President, Operations
- Registrar