

V4.5

# Hockey Mom of the Year

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DOBBINTON — A local mother of six children, including five hockey players, was recently honoured as Canada's Hockey Mom of the Year during the 2007 MasterCard Memorial Cup in Vancouver.

Marie Hammell of Dobbinton has juggled working on the family's dairy farm, attending a plethora of hockey games, being an executive member of the Tara Minor Hockey Association and recently taking on a part-time job. Hammell's family is much appreciative of her efforts, and unknowingly to her, she was entered in the contest sponsored by MasterCard Canada.

Hammell's daughter Cheryl, with help from siblings Tim and Janette, wrote the 250-word essay submission about why their mom should win the contest, and on May 10 Tim received a call to notify the family Hammell was the winner of the central region.

That evening all the Hammell children attended the family farm, and Hammell thought they were coming for an early Mother's Day since she was scheduled to work that Sunday.

"One by one they all stopped in. They all knew about it," Hammell said. "Then they told me that night. It was a total surprise."

Hammell was part of three finalists from across Canada that also included winners from eastern region and western region. On May 23 MasterCard revealed Hammell as the grand prize winner, which included a trip to the Memorial Cup in Vancouver.

On May 25 Hammell boarded a plane with husband Jim and children Scott, Tim, Janette and Wes (Steve stayed home to do the chores and Cheryl stayed behind with her newborn and two-year-old daughters) en route to Vancouver.

Upon arrival out west, Hammell said they were treated well all weekend with a limousine to where they needed to go, some spending money, hotel accommodations and tickets to the



Contributed Photo

Hammell family members were excited to meet Bobby Orr and Henry and Linda Staal during the Canadian Hockey Mom of the Year event in Vancouver. Pictured are, front, left, Marie and Jim; back, left, Wes, Janette, Henry and Linda Staal, Scott, Tim and Bobby Orr.

Memorial Cup final on Sunday afternoon, which crowned the hometown Vancouver Giants as the Canadian Hockey League (CHL) champions.

During the second intermission of the game, Hammell was introduced to the crowd and walked out onto the ice where she was greeted by CHL president David Branch, hockey mom Linda Staal and Hall-of-Famer Bobby Orr. She was then presented with a dozen roses.

Hammell said meeting Orr was the best part of the trip, and her entire family was able to spend an hour with the hockey legend during a meet and greet the previous day when he also signed autographs.

The family also spotted Gordie Howe, Jacques Martin and Pat Quinn during the game, and Tim was able to speak with Quinn for a short time.

Another interesting part of the trip for Hammell occurred after her on-ice appearance as a woman in the crowd from Owen Sound came up to congratulate her and tell her it was nice to meet the local winner. Hammell also met a few others in attendance from southwestern Ontario.

Hammell also had the chance

to meet eastern region winner Glenna Thebault from Halifax, Nova Scotia. They had a short visit over a Sunday morning coffee. Western region winner Marni Jill Lind of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, had to leave the event early. Thebault and Lind were honoured on ice during the semi-final game on Friday night.

Overall, Hammell said the trip was a humbling experience. "Just watching the kids in hockey and being involved was enough, but this is very special."

She added, "The MasterCard people treated us really well. They were the sponsors and they did an excellent job. And Vancouver is a beautiful city, it's something we'll never forget."

Being a farming family, Hammell said it's tough to get a family vacation, and it was nice to get away with most of the children. The last family vacation was a trip to Walt Disney World about 15 years ago.

"To coin a phrase from MasterCard, memories made at the Memorial Cup in Vancouver — priceless," Hammell said.

Becoming a hockey mom did not start with the first few Hammell children, instead it came later when Tim begged to play. The following year Steve laced up the skates, followed by Scott, Janette and Wes, and they have excelled with the sport.