

Girls hockey is scoring some big goals in Stouffville

Skeptics of girls' game have been proven wrong by the recent growth of the sport in the area

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

When the Whitchurch-Stouffville Girls' Hockey League was organized 28 years ago, some said it wouldn't last.

They were wrong. Not only has it lasted, it has flourished.

Currently, there are 305 players

who have taken to the ice. The league's now expanded into neighboring Markham. With excellent results.

The name has been changed to the Stouffville-Markham Girls' Hockey Association.

There are four house leagues. These include novice, atom, pee-wee and bantam/midget. In addition, there are five rep teams.

The age range is seven to 20. Dianne White, president for the past five years, is ecstatic concerning the league's success, pointing to three provincial championships won last season. Six teams were Ontario finalists.

"It's wonderful to see how much they learn and improve in a single season," says White. "It's very rewarding."



DIANNE WHITE: League president is happy with number of girls playing.

While White no longer has family members playing, the satisfac-

tion of seeing others succeed, keeps her coming back.

Others on the executive include: Ken Paterson, vice-president; Rick Sparks, treasurer; and Charles Giliberto, ice-convenor. John Hubbard is referee-in-chief.

Stouffville's games are Monday and Tuesday evenings; Saturday and Sunday mornings. Markham games are Wednesday, Friday and Sunday evenings and Saturday afternoons.

The rep teams participate in five tournaments including the world's largest at Brampton on Easter weekend.

"Winning or losing's not important," White claims, "it's the enjoyment that counts." Rep teams take it more seriously, she admits.

This year, the atom team is in AA

status. Next year, the bantam club will attain this level.

White attributes much of the league's success to excellent coaching. "They're fabulous," she says.

More women are encouraged to become involved.

White also credits Cliff Dunkeld and Al Piette with resurrecting the league when division graduates created a vacuum at the lower-age end.

"Numbers were down to 90," Dunkeld recalls, "our recruiting campaign paid off."

"Excluding golf, it's the fastest growing sport in the world," he says.

Dunkeld is loud in his praise of White's commitment.

"She's doing a great job."

More than 300 girls undoubtedly agree.

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STOUFFVILLE MARKHAM GIRLS HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

The Stouffville-Markham Girls' Hockey Association is now accepting applications for coaching positions for the 2001-2002 season.

SMGHA expects to field the following teams:

- Novice - select (1992 or later)
- Atom A/AA and Atom B/BB (1990 & 1991)
- Pee-wee A/AA and Pee-wee B/BB (1988 & 1989)
- Bantam AA and Bantam A/BB (1986 & 1987)
- Midget A/AA and Midget B/BB (1984 & 1985)
- Intermediate B/BB (1981 to 1983)

Applicants are required to send a letter of interest by mail to SMGHA - 244 Hemlock Dr., Stouffville, Ontario L4A 5A5 Or Fax 905-640-1706 **Deadline is March 20, 2001**

Player tryouts will commence in late April after the OWHA championships. If you require additional information please call Charles Giliberto at (905) 471-2750 or email: cgiliberto@home.com

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