

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT  
2004-2005**

***The Ontario Women's Hockey Association's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season  
Thanks for Your Leadership  
Supporting an Athlete  
Enriching a Life  
Growing the Game***

What is the Ontario Women's Hockey Association? It is:

- female hockey, a stand-alone, unique game and culture
- players, coaches, managers, trainers, administrators, parents, officials, sponsors, partners, fans, suppliers, supporters
- house league teams who compete for fun, competition and excellence
- representative teams who compete for fun, competition and excellence
- associations who coordinate house leagues, representative teams and programs
- leagues who bring together teams to provide competition
- over 42,000 people who bring different strengths and ideas to the game
- over 42,000 people who share common values and who enjoy the privilege of being on the OWHA team, a team that is the recognized world-leader in female hockey programmes and opportunities
- it is being part of a team that understands the players are people first and athletes second
- it is being part of a team that understands it is a provincial team and that our strength is each other

What are the highlights of the 2004-2005 season?

The competition within the Ontario Women's Hockey Association continues to excel at a phenomenal rate. The strength of this was very evident in national competition as the OWHA captured gold (Ontario Host Team Toronto Aeros) and silver (Team Ontario Brampton Thunder) medals at the Esso Women's National Championship and gold (Team Ontario Red) medals at the Under 18 Nationals.

Two OWHA pioneers received National Awards. Cathy Phillips was presented with the Isobel Gathorne Hardy award and Angela James received Hockey Canada's Female Breakthrough Award. Both players helped pave the way for the World Championships, the Olympics and the widespread opportunities now available to young girls and adult women.

The OWHA Provincial Championships in both February and April were a showcase of talent at all ages and levels of competition. Even more important than the intense competition on the ice was the predominant atmosphere of respect and teamwork off the ice. A true example of the spirit of the provincials was demonstrated in the Bantam C final. Ripley and Timmins remained tied after 3 x 12 minute periods of regulation time followed by 10 x 10 minute sudden-victory periods. As the game progressed, the two teams drew closer together. The competitive spirit remained but it was overshadowed by the respect of their opponent as they shared in the phenomenon. The two exhausted teams were awarded co-gold medals – a first in the OWHA. We sincerely congratulate both teams on this great "team" victory. Everyone won in this final.

If we are truly to meet the needs of the participants, sport must be kept in perspective. This is evident on a daily basis as individual members face challenges in their personal lives. This human reality hit the OWHA hard twice in western Ontario in January 2005.

The Bluewater Senior BB team lost its playing coach and leader on January 9<sup>th</sup>. Twenty-three year-old Laura Wilson was taken from her family in very tragic circumstances. She was a treasured daughter of OWHA volunteer, Teresa Wilson. She was valued by her teammates. Laura's legacy will live on in those who had the joy of knowing her. With the ongoing lobby for preventative action and tougher sentences for violence, Laura's passing may save another.

The Windsor Wildcats Intermediate BB team's horrific bus accident touched the sporting world and Canadian society. The physical and emotional trauma of this accident to those who were on the bus and to their families is only truly understood by those closest to the accident. The desire to reach out and support the team came from the OWHA, Rochester Edge, female and male hockey, the NHL, celebrities and the general public. Three short weeks after the accident, the team fulfilled their goal and participated in the provincial championship. The memory of Rick Edwards, Brian Edwards and Cathy Roach will live on. The thoughts and prayers of the OWHA remain with the Windsor Wildcats as they continue to move forward.

What were the Opportunities?

The Ontario Women's Hockey Association continues to face challenges. In spite of the success of female hockey, there remain segments of society that do not know that girls and women can play hockey. There are still many teams and associations that are struggling for ice time and credibility. In many cases, it is their female hockey "opposition" who steps in to assist. This is the strength of the OWHA team.

We have the opportunity to address concerns and issues as they arise within the OWHA. The reality is that forty-two thousand people are not going to agree on everything! The reality is also that there is tremendous expertise within forty-two thousand people!

Communication vehicles are tremendously advanced with world-wide contact instantaneous. Communication can be very unreliable with time-saving methods often consuming our lives. If we want to reach someone, do we phone them at home, office or cell, email them at home, office or blackberry or fax them at home office or some other locale – or should we spend the time to try all methods? After all, what will they be checking and what are actually working, charged, and full of paper? When we receive communication from someone through methods noted earlier in this paragraph are all messages the same or, if different, which is the updated version? Communication is indeed a challenge!

Chat lines are another avenue of communication that have debatable value. They can be useful and they can be abused. Many teams have shut down chat lines as inappropriate and hurtful comments have been posted. Whatever happened to the rule of thumb – "if you have something to say that is positive, put it in writing and if there is something negative, talk about it"? We must remember that everything negative that appears reflects on everyone within the OWHA. There may be temptation to vent about something we do not agree with. There is not one person within the OWHA who does not feel like this at times. Let's think about the impact if every one of us posted a negative when we felt like this. What would this do for the credibility of the OWHA? How would this impact on our efforts to gain credibility for female hockey?

What are our Real Opportunities?

The highlight of the OWHA Annual General Meetings and the General Meetings are the Success Stories. These are the real things that happen every day and every year within the OWHA. These are what female hockey and this association are. Let's Accentuate the PAWSitive!

The Ontario Women's Hockey Association continues its work to strengthen its position and voice in the world of hockey. The OWHA is committed to the support, advancement and protection of our members, our team. Every single one of us is one small part of one great Association!

Sincere thanks to everyone on thirty-years of history and success. Please take time to enjoy your role. Please take time to pass along a PAWSitive to your friends and teammates in the OWHA!