KC Southside Knights Annual General Meeting

Saturday, May 11, 2019

President’s Report

Thank you and welcome everyone to the KC Knights Annual General Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation dinner. I appreciate your taking the time to attend this important event as it provides our membership the opportunity to help set the direction of the Knights organization for the coming years.

The strength of our hockey association is indeed reflected in the commitment shown by our volunteers, without whom we would not be one of the most successful organizations in Edmonton Minor Hockey. So first let me extend a sincere thank you to the board of directors for the 2018/2019 season and their efforts in making it an enjoyable experience for everyone, especially our players.

When I refer to our hockey association as being one of the most successful in minor hockey, I measure that by the hockey experience we are providing for our kids. This isn’t to say that we do not always strive to do better in areas of player and coach development, but unlike many other hockey associations, KC Knights has been successful in setting itself apart, and offering a unique experience to our members.

Since becoming President of this organization, I have sought clarity in defining what KC hockey is all about, what sets us apart from all other hockey associations, and the answer became very clear to me just recently with the successful conclusion of our annual Spring on Ice tournament. Again, without the support of the volunteers, the SOI hockey tournament would not be one of the best of its kind in the entire province of Alberta.

I was particularly moved by the fact the tournament brought in teams from as far away as Rankin Inlet. That these teams travel to Edmonton, at a rather hefty price, to attend our associations’ hockey tournament is something for which we should all be proud. This story was covered by Global News, and for anyone who saw that, I’m confident it illustrated a very important quality that the game of hockey carries, which is inclusiveness.

This was only topped off by the two pee wee teams, Rankin Inlet and Grande Prairie, that collaborated in order to have an autistic player score his first goal. The video of this event actually went somewhat viral on social media, and ended up being seen by thousands of people across the world. This illustrated yet another important quality that is fostered through the game of hockey; sportsmanship.

Through these events, considering what our association has to offer our children, I have realized that KC Knights hockey is all about inclusion, diversity and sportsmanship. These are the principles we must set forth in defining ourselves as an organization. If we put ourselves in the place of new parents considering what sport to enrol their children in, and then which association to register with, the appeal of these principles is tantamount.

I say this with the understanding that the game of hockey is not what it used to be, and in fact has increasing competition from other sports, not to mention inactivity generally speaking resulting from the dominance of the video game industry.

In my era, when I was younger, hockey was the only game in town, and recruiting new players did not require marketing what the sport had to offer. Today is different. We must expound the virtues of what the game of hockey has to offer, debunk the myths that it is a violent and expensive sport, and focus on inclusion, diversity and sportsmanship. These are qualities all parents want to foster in their children, and if we can assist in that respect, then I believe we have achieved our mandate.

I would ask everyone here to please reach out to your friends, family and neighbors to educate them about the positive benefits that hockey can bring, and in particular with the Knights organization. This will set us apart and start building the base of our organization, which is in the five to eight-year-old age group.

Turning to more specific matters as it relates to hockey and our organization, this year has been somewhat challenging with a number of significant changes to minor hockey, including substantial changes to the novice program and a new tiering system introduced by Hockey Alberta. I understand the tiering is likely to remain the same for the coming season however as an organization we have learned lessons in how to adjust to the new system and Hockey Edmonton has been instructed to use more discretion and vigilance on how teams are tiered in a general sense.

Recently I met with the presidents of all parishes and KC head office and there is a renewed commitment to leverage the advantages of our collective associations in order to maximize befits to our players, coaches and volunteers. This means more investment by KC head office in coach development, and providing three additional ice slots per team in the Atom and Peewee categories, which above and beyond the excellent player development camps that we funded this season.

KC will not only allocate and pay for those ice times but is also offering a subsidy for professional instruction for these development camps. At the Atom level these ice slots can be pooled and the association offers 9 ice times dedicated to power skating, which personally I believe is critical to early skill development.

In fact when I coached my son in Sherwood Park the 93/94 year had a full year of power skating at the Novice and Atom level and by Bantam AAA six of those kids were drafted in the top 10 of the WHL entry draft.

In providing our players a full experience throughout their hockey careers, it has also been acknowledged by KC head office that too many players are moving to other organizations after peewee, which is understandable given the Bantam program is run through their association on the north end. Therefore, a south side bantam program is being established for the southside and the details of that are being put together and I expect the VP Hockey Operations to make this a priority after our AGM and before the commencement of next season.

Other changes to expect this coming season is the full implementation of the new novice program which eliminates novice minor and major and moves the entire category to half ice games.

Since we will only have one registration fee for novice, this has been set at $450 which is completely reasonable and reflective of the organizations’ objective in keeping players inside our system for their hockey career. All other registration fees remain the same as last year except we will be getting the extra ice slots from KC head office as I mentioned above.

In conclusion I would like to again thank the volunteers and board members for their efforts in making last season a huge success. I am encouraging everyone to help us get the word out about what our organization is all about – hockey skill and development, but also making better people by emphasizing inclusion, diversity and sportsmanship.

Thank you