



**CARHA Hockey –
2020/21 Annual Report**

Message from the President

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March of 2020, the hockey world shut down. Despite a summer of optimism, this virus continued to play havoc with the world, which negatively impacted the sport of hockey. Cohorts were implemented which saw leagues, teams and tournaments having to adjust the number of players permitted to participate. Hockey was on a roller coaster of being permitted to play to being forced to completely shut down for the majority of the 2020-21 season.

From an association standpoint, this situation required staff to be creative, stay on top of provincial health protocols, develop *Return to Play* documents that were consistent with the specific provincial regulations with respect to the sport and provide advice and guidance along the way. The importance of extending flexible membership options was critical as the unpredictability of the virus was real. The organization negotiated favourable terms with its insurance carrier, which was key with all of the uncertainty around shut downs. As a result, the association was able to maintain presence in the marketplace, generate revenue, albeit much less than the 2019-20 season and survive.

During these quieter times, the association placed much emphasis on its connections with municipalities. From providing guidance to inquiring about their vaccination status, simple conversations facilitated stronger ties. Stemming from this, new business is anticipated. An example is *Lift Her Up*; an organization that provides opportunities for females to play the game. Our team connected with the *Lift Her Up* leaders to help them establish a tournament. Despite not being CARHA Hockey members, we provided them with the tools to initiate their efforts. As a result, the tournament and all of the participating teams registered and the plan is for their league to register as members in 2022-23. This is a prime example of how important establishing relationships with municipalities and similar groups will be to the future growth of the organization.

Some of iPlayHockey's core business of spring AAA teams and summer hockey camps/schools were able to get up and run in the summer of 2020 however, entering the spring of 2021, they were also in jeopardy as COVID-19 remained present. The summer of 2021 is looking promising and it is projected that these groups will be back up and running at that time.

Both the Pacific Cup and Hometown Classic were cancelled and the association did not have one affiliated tournament register due to the shutdown. Furthermore, the Thunder Bay league was unable to get up and running however, the Travellers Hockey League was able to get a shortened season in, despite having only 24 teams (as opposed to 72).

From a sponsorship standpoint, the association was unable to deliver on its relationship with Molson Canada (Ontario) as this program's foundation is the affiliated tournaments. Without these events happening, we opted to take a hiatus from our partnership (from a financial perspective), however, maintained the receipt program as an act of good faith. Although the

association continued its partnership with Keener Jerseys, it did have to extend the tenure of the contract by four months to help offset the times in which hockey was shutdown.

The original 2020 CARHA Hockey World Cup, which was scheduled to take place in Richmond, BC from March 29th to April 4th, 2020 was initially postponed to March 2021. However, with the uncertainty surrounding travel conditions and the continued shutdowns that COVID-19 continued to bring, the association made the decision in October of 2020 to further postpone the Event to March 2022. The Host City, hoteliers, sponsors and partners alike have all continued their support and will be involved in the 2022 CARHA Hockey World Cup. Although too early to tell, we are optimistic that we will be able to host at least 115 teams with representation from at least 10 countries.

From an internal standpoint, the association moved to a remote working environment, which saw some hiccups in the early months. However, despite the bumps in the road, the staff quickly learned how to work remotely, took the time during shutdowns to research, analyze and truly understand our marketplace, and experienced an *Appreciative Inquiry* exercise which led to new strategies and approaches that have guided us through the latter part of this season.

To further this effort, the association also conducted a strategic review and analysis, which resulted in new programming concepts and initiations that will be launched over the next three years.

Our staff did see some changes as a couple opted to pursue new opportunities and new staff were brought on. Although challenging to onboard in a virtual environment, the association is incredibly proud of its team, how it has pulled together through these unique times and continues to strengthen its ties with the hockey community through its collective effort. After surveying the internal team, it was determined that a hybrid working environment was desired. As such, the 2021-22 season will see the office continue to work a couple of days remotely with the balance of the week in the office.

Although no one could have anticipated that COVID-19 would have remained an issue for as long as it has, the difficult decisions the association made back in 2020 such as eliminating the team welcome gifts, reduced promotional spending, etc. would have to stay status quo until financial recovery could be realized. To this day and as a result of a reserve, the association is incredibly proud to have been able to maintain its staff and keep its doors open throughout this pandemic.

Thank you to the Board of Management, the association's internal team, our partners and sponsors, and most importantly to our respected members for their loyalty over the last year.

Michael Peski
President

Mission Statement

To be the dedicated resource and service provider for rec hockey communities in Canada by creating programs and offering benefits that enhance the experience of those involved in the game of hockey.

Membership Program

The association's membership program continues to be the number one revenue generator for CARHA Hockey. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns, this revenue line continued to be the primary support financially for the organization. However, as noted in the financials, this revenue line was significantly reduced due to the lack of hockey played across Canada.

As a means to maintain some revenue, the organization launched a flexible membership program. This flexibility extended peace of mind to teams and leagues as the unpredictability of lockdowns was their current reality.

The association continued down the path of strengthening its ties with the hockey communities and municipalities. It demonstrated its leadership by keeping apprised of provincial protocols and ensuring its *Return to Play* and *On-Ice Hockey Options* documents were kept up to date.

The internal team continues to provide tremendous customer service, guidance and leadership with respect to communicating the new COVID ways and through this dialogue has established new relationships, strengthened existing relationships and overall, has positioned the association at the forefront of recreational hockey in Canada.

Provincial Tournaments

CARHA Hockey typically operates two provincial events each season; the Pacific Cup (Victoria, BC) and the Hometown Classic (Ottawa, ON). Due to COVID-19 however, neither of these events were able to occur, which negatively impacted the association's bottom line.

Sponsorship

With COVID-19 protocols essentially wiping out the potential for affiliated tournaments to take place along with post-league play gatherings, the association recognized that it would not be able to deliver on its previous commitments to Molson Canada (Ontario). As a result, the association decided to continue the receipt program as an act of good faith with the goal of re-entering into a partnership in the Fall of 2021.

Keener Jerseys maintained its relationship and the association and with the CARHA Hockey World Cup.

The Royal Oak maintained its partnership with the association however, due to the lockdowns, this establishment faced challenging times. It is not expected that this partnership will continue past the 2020-21 season.

2020 CARHA Hockey World Cup = 2022 CARHA Hockey World Cup

The CARHA Hockey World Cup is organized every four years in a select Canadian city, and is an event that attracts participants from all across Canada, the United States, Europe, and Asia. Originally, the 2020 edition of the Event was to be hosted in Richmond, BC from March 29th to April 5th, 2020 however, due to COVID-19, the Event was initially postponed to March of 2021 and then again postponed a second time to March 2022. COVID-19 continues to play havoc with the plans for the 2022 Event but the association remains optimistic that it will come to fruition.

Once again, the Event was able to negotiate room blocks at the same nine hotels for its 2022 dates of March 27th to April 3rd, 2022. In addition, all venues (Richmond Olympic Oval, Richmond Ice Centre and Minoru Arena) were also secured for those dates.

It is anticipated that the Event will see a decline in participation however, is striving to host 115 participating teams from 15 countries.

Tournament Support Program

CARHA Hockey's tournament support program offered two sanctioning options for tournament organizers. The first option was a basic program that offers insurance and tournament organizing materials whereas the second option provides divisional championship prizing. The 2020-21 season did not see any tournaments get off the ground due to COVID-19 rules and protocols. Subsequently, the financial picture was negatively affected.

League Operations

The organization operates two league: the Thunder Bay Adult Hockey League (summer league) and the Ottawa Travellers Hockey League. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the Thunder Bay Adult Hockey League was unable to operate. However, the Ottawa Travellers Hockey League was able to get 15 games in and successfully completed a winter season with 24 teams. Although a significant reduction in participating teams, the association was pleased to have been able to deliver a league in its hometown.

The league operation strategy continues to be an important facet of our organization as it accomplishes brand extension for CARHA Hockey, increases the numbers of players in its member database and provides guaranteed membership revenue for the association.

Referee Program

In 2020-21, the association saw a domino effect on its participating referees as a result of COVID-19. With limited hockey taking place and referees being reluctant to participate, the number of registered officials saw a significant drop.

Despite the aforementioned, the association maintained its Official Rule Book and Online Referee Quiz.

iPlayHockey

iPlayHockey continues to fill a void in the marketplace with the offering of hockey insurance for youth hockey schools, camps and AAA spring/summer teams. Due to the timing of the lockdowns and the fact that many provincial protocols allowed for minor hockey to take place, COVID-19 did not have the same impact on the iPlayHockey line of business as it had on CARHA Hockey's. Most camps and schools were able to operate however, with reduced numbers and new approaches. As a result, the iPlayHockey revenue helped support the association from a financial perspective through these challenging times.

Social Media and Communications

With the ever-changing global situation over the past year, our social media channels have been an important way to stay connected. Facebook is our most popular platform, followed by Instagram, and for the majority of our accounts, followers continued to grow. Twitter, which remains primarily a news feed, saw slight declines, which can also be expected as Twitter's user growth decreases. While it is important to see growth in our followers, we also want to gain followers who engage with our content.

As social media trends have evolved during the pandemic, this has been an opportunity to analyze activity across our various accounts. With more content out there to contend with, understanding the different voices for CARHA Hockey, CARHA Women's Hockey, CARHA Hockey World Cup, and iPlayHockey allows us to tailor what we're posting to share content that resonates.

Sharing relevant news stories on each of our channels keeps our followers informed of current events and topics. We have received positive feedback, specifically on the CARHA Women's Hockey account, about this shared content. It's important for brands to find ways to stay

connected with their followers. The focus shifted to adding more content that features our members to provide more variation. The CARHA Hockey World Cup account has always shown strong engagement highlighting participants and event features as the teams enjoy reliving moments they were a part of.

Increased engagement (likes, shares, and comments) helps to increase the reach of our posts. By looking internally to share more stories from the association and recreational hockey community – to get our membership, followers, staff, etc. involved – we’re adding a human element to our accounts and content people will like and share. Showcasing the CARHA Hockey team with our limited-edition trading card series has been very popular. There are many stories to tell from within our organization, and what we are doing from a community standpoint. Continuing to think creatively with videos, challenges, giveaways, interviews, and asking followers to share photos, memories, and experiences strengthens our social media presence on each channel. The one year out celebration on CARHA Hockey World Cup provided a preview of the unique activities to experience during the week, like entertainment, and was an opportunity to collaborate with our sponsors.

Followers as of August 2021:

CARHA Hockey:	CARHA Hockey World Cup:
Facebook – 5,738 (+ 0.8%)	Facebook – 2,594 (+5%)
Twitter – 4,240 (-3.5%)	Twitter – 3,204 (-2.5%)

OUR THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO THE CARHA HOCKEY TEAM

Michael Peski, President

Lori Lopez, Executive Director

Lucy Peeling, Manager, Special Events and Programs

Laurie Langlois, Manager, Member Services

Shannon Killeen, Manager, Service and Administration

Scott Wilson, Manager, Hockey Operations

Clarinda Sharpe, Coordinator, Member Services

Becky Kolberg, Manager, Communications and Digital Media

Bria Sullivan, Coordinator, Member Services

James Daly, Coordinator, CARHA Hockey World Cup and Hockey Events

Angelina Fonzo, Customer Service Representative

Angela Nobles, Customer Service Representative

Tyler Broderick, Coordinator, Communications and Digital Media

Shawn Perrier, Manager, Programs and Promotions (iPlayHockey)

Patti Kenny, Bookkeeper

Tom Nightingale, IT and Database

Ross MacLachlan, Website and Database

John Luimes, Designer

Keith Milne, Cartoonist

Robin Billingham, Digital Media Design and Development