

**The WMHA has a rich history spanning more than 55 years. Read below and follow the WMHA through 56 years of hockey excellence!**

## **The Early Years**

**The earliest records found begin with the 1954/55 season. That was the first year Windsor Minor affiliated with the OMHA. Registrations costs paid to the OMHA were \$.25 per team. Insurance costs were \$1.00 per player and that provided coverage of \$250.00 with a \$10.00 deductible.**

**It was a loosely run league. The officers elected to run the league numbered from three to seven people. Each team had a representative that attended the meetings. Bylaws and rules were often passed to cover situations as they occurred. There were not two consecutive years with the same twelve teams participating. Organization meetings began within a month of the season's start. Often teams did not commit to playing until the last moment. There always seemed to be teams waiting to join and sometimes teams were accepted one meeting but were forced to withdraw at the next when an existing team decided to return at the last minute. The teams were allowed to keep any eligible returning players and the players not signed were deemed free agents allowed to sign with any other team.**

**The league consisted only of midget teams. There were eight teams the first year and twelve teams from 1955/56 to 1959/60. The majority of the teams were from Windsor but there were teams at various times from LaSalle, Amherstburg, St.. Clair Beach, Belle River and Riverside.**

**Sponsors were in charge of their own teams. The sponsors paid a \$100.00 entry fee to Windsor Minor and provided sweaters and socks for the team. The sponsors also had to provide a minimum of two people to administer and organize their teams. Players paid no registration fees as we know them, but had to pay 25 cents for every game they played. Admission was charged at the door, 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for students. Each team was assigned a sponsor night where they**

were responsible for the collection of these fees. After the two referees were paid \$1.00 each per game, the timekeepers paid \$1.00 per game and the ticket taker \$5.00 a night, the remaining money was divided between the team that sponsored the night and WMHA. Windsor Minor received only 10% of the net for the night.

All games were played at Windsor Arena. Friday night was the main night but some games were not officially scheduled. They were made up whenever ice became available at the arena. Four games were usually played each night and Windsor Minor was charged \$100.00 per night. From the records, it seems that the season did not start until November and was only eight games or so plus playoffs for the top teams. Lanspeary Park was available starting in 1956 when artificial ice was available at the outdoor facility. Windsor Minor received three hours per week and used this ice for practices for the Windsor teams and any other team that didn't have ice available to them in their own centres. One of the first bylaws passed was that no team was allowed to practice between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.. Another bylaw, passed in February of 1959, made it mandatory that all players wear helmets during games. The league purchased thirty helmets that were kept at the Windsor Arena and were available for all of the league players to use.

## **Organizational History (Modern Era)**

Windsor Minor Hockey became the league that we now know in 1960. That season, after years of affiliation, WMHA joined with South Windsor Minor Hockey and Sandwich West Minor Hockey to form one league. The league played out of three arenas: Windsor, South Windsor and Adie Knox. Each arena had every division playing out of it and the teams played twelve game seasons. In able to better use the ice available, divisions were running out of the same arena starting in the 1971-72 season. Sandwich West continued to operate its juvenile travel team as a 'B' travel team in WMHA. There were a couple years of growing pains with members of the now extinct systems seemingly having problems conforming with the rules and regulations of Windsor Minor. Individuals that had access to ice

from their old associations were subletting the ice to Windsor's teams for practices at a profit. As a result, WMHA decided to approve all ice used by teams in their organization.

The league was incorporated with the government as a non-profit organization on June 22, 1971. Around that same time they approached the City of Windsor Council about receiving a grant or subsidy to help offset the rising costs of running the league. They were granted a discount on the ice they used. This discount existed until the early nineties when it reduced yearly until the late nineties when it was no longer was in effect.

With costs going up regularly, the need to fundraise to keep the costs to the players as low as possible was obvious. Bingos and casino nights provided needed funds over the years. Raffles have grown to be expected every year. The first raffle offering cash prizes was held in the 1973-74 season. First prize was \$1,000 and the total prize board offered was \$1,500.00.

The makeup of the board itself underwent many changes over the years, particularly after the death of Sedo Martinello on January 27, 1983. Sedo had been president of WMHA since 1960 and Windsor Arena, which he managed, was the headquarters of Windsor Minor. After Sedo's passing, WMHA moved its office to a room rented from the city at Adie Knox Arena. Friends and fellow board members established the Sedo Martinello Bursary Fund to give monetary awards to Windsor area student athletes to attend post secondary schools in the city. Money was raised by the holding of a yearly golf tournament and by raffles held at the WMHA Coaches Appreciation Night.

The most notable shaping of the board began in 1980. The ladies' auxiliary, which was operated as an almost when needed group of board members wives until then, was reformed and given a voting position on the board. This position lasted just a few years but was reinstated on the board in the mid-nineties as a parents association. Also, over the years, the director of the three divisions of WMHA, novice, house league and travel became vice presidents. The Director of Novice became the last

to achieve this in 1992. With the need of consolidating its dealings with the provincial governing body for hockey, Windsor Minor established the OMHA Representative as a position on the board to oversee all administration with the OMHA. Duties that were once handled by committees became the responsibility of individual board members. New positions that evolved over the years included directors of fund-raising, tournaments ( travel and house league), skills development and coaching.

Throughout the years WMHA has had merger talks with Riverside Minor Hockey. In 1984, talks were initiated formally but did not progress very well. Interlocked house league divisions, which at times also included Tecumseh Shoreline, Riverside and Belle River, have been tried at different times but lasted only a couple of years every time. Differing philosophies and administration problems seemed to be the downfall whenever the interlock was tried. Windsor Minor has opened its arms and welcomed outsiders a few times. After the OMHA reversed a 1977 decision to not allow girls to play minor hockey in 1987 by letting girls under twelve years of age to play, the league accepted girls for the first time. The association has had many girls participate in the program, ranging from novice right up to the midget division (seventeen year olds). In the summer of 1987 St. Clair Beach Arena closed, leaving Shoreline Minor Hockey no place to play and forced to suspend operations. WMHA, along with other surrounding leagues, held special registrations for the Shoreline players. Tecumseh Shoreline returned as a league for the 1995 season and players playing peewee and below were required to return to their home organization while the older players had a one time choice to make in regards to where they wanted to play.

As with the world in general, the nineties have brought many changes. With the growing popularity of hockey, arenas have been twinned to provide more ice surfaces for the city. These added playing areas have been both a blessing and curse. The league was awarded extra hours, perhaps not as many as they requested, and were able to increase the program that they could offer. Every team now has practice time on a regular basis throughout the year as well as the opportunity to attend

skill development clinics conducted by the league. However, not only were seasons interrupted by construction delays, the twinned arenas have become money making avenues for the city. Not only has the subsidy enjoyed by WMHA been eliminated, but actual costs per hour have risen drastically.

Parental involvement also increased in the nineties, for better and for worse. Verbal and physical attacks on the volunteers had grown to the extreme that players were being suspended for the actions of their parents. This resulted in one lawsuit by a parent wanting his son reinstated in WMHA. The courts ruled the WMHA had the right to deny registrations from people that they were unwilling to accept due to past conduct. As a progression to the suit, the league made many organization and accountability changes. The Fair Play Pledge & the Code of Conduct was instituted as well as a policy to deal with abuse & harassment. The WMHA Constitution, which for many years was not available, was updated and made available to anyone wishing a copy. The Constitution is also now available on the WMHA website.

Windsor Minor Hockey Association became aware new dangers to the league and its participants. Directors and officers insurance was purchased to protect the volunteers on the board from personal loss due to legal action. Starting in 1996, board members were required to obtain police clearances. This was expanded to all head coaches the next season and all other volunteers. At the 2007 AGM the Windsor AAA Zone officially split from the WMHA.

## **Community Involvement**

Windsor Minor Hockey has recognized the need to be good community citizens for many years. Players unable to afford to play hockey had been subsidized by the league, usually through money raised from sponsors or fund raising for just that purpose. During the seventies blood donor clinics were held regularly. As well, boys on the Big Brothers waiting list were treated to Windsor Spitfires Junior hockey games by the league.

Even during years of fiscal belt tightening one event has withstood the budgetary axe. A Christmas party for our novice players has been held every year since 1972. The WMHA has always taken care to make sure enough stockings were ordered so that no one went without. Any left over stockings were then distributed to different children charities. Pediatric wards, children aid societies and Hiatus House are just some of the recipients of Windsor Minor's generosity over the years.

The nineties brought a greater awareness of the unfortunate in the city. Canned food drives began in the mid-nineties for the Unemployed Help Centre. A tragedy that left the nephew of one the league's long time coaches a spastic quadriplegic sparked a campaign to raise money for Easter Seals. House league players solicited pledges for how many goals their teams would score over four games. Although only a low percentage responded, more than \$2000 was raised for Easter Seals. The players that raised the most money went on television during the annual telethon to present the cheque. A skate-a-thon was held in 1998 to raise money for Hospice. In the event, co-sponsored by London Life Insurance, novice and atom house league players raised over \$3700. Players received prizes for reaching different levels of pledges.

## **Colours & Uniforms**

The colours of Windsor Minor Hockey have been the subject of many debates at the board level over the years. The original colour scheme was green and white; green pants and helmets, green and white gloves, sweaters and socks. After expansion of the NHL in 1967, the Minnesota North Stars became the only team in the pro league with the same uniform colours. The NHL sweater combinations became standard and every time the professional colours changed, the harder it became to buy just green and white uniforms without making it a special purchase.

As a result, when the North Stars added gold to their uniform WMHA, in 1975, officially added gold to its own colour scheme. However, when the Stars added black to their attire, the disagreements at the board level began. Although black was

not officially added as a WMHA colour until the annual general meeting at the end of the 1992-93 season, the Travel Teams had black away jerseys for the 92-93 season and black gloves were allowed. With so many changes and differing of opinions as to the official colour scheme for each piece of equipment, the Travel Teams were often a very colourful collection. The 1996-97 board assigned deadlines for all players to be dressed alike at the travel level. Black pants were mandatory by January 1, 1997 and black helmets were necessary by October 31 of the same year. At this time all players were required to be dressed alike when representing Windsor as travel teams.

The sweater design itself has undergone several changes over the years. Originally, the sponsor of the team's name was crested on the front of the shirts and Windsor was on the back above the numbers. The first logo was a very plain circle with crossed sticks and a puck inside, surrounded by the words - WINDSOR MINOR ASSOCIATION. This was used mainly on crests and awards. A new emblem, although not copyrighted until 1975, was introduced for the 1972 -73 season, a maple leaf which was patterned after the Toronto Maple Leafs logo, right down to the number of points on the leaf. The leaf had WINDSOR printed down the middle with sticks on either side. A capital M and H were on the sides of this and a capital A was under Windsor. This new insignia was also mainly used on jackets, awards and letterhead. It was not until the 1996- 97 season that it was decided that all new shirts purchased after January 1, 1997 would have the WMHA crest on the front and the sponsor's name on the back. With the adaptation of the STOP program for the 1995-96 season, stop signs were added to the back of the shirts, between the numbers and sponsor bar as a reminder to the players about the danger of checking from behind. The stop sign was added to the travel shirts the following year. The 1996-97 campaign brought the introduction of a new emblem for Windsor Minor. After coming to an agreement with the Windsor Spitfires junior team about an affiliation, a new logo incorporating both associations logos was designed. The new WMHA emblem remained a maple leaf but the Spitfire logo of an airplane with tail smoke hockey sticks was inside the leaf. WINDSOR was printed on an angle under the

wings of the plane. The word JUNIOR was to the left of the base of the leaf in small capital letters and SPITFIRES was in bold letters under the base of the leaf. This ended many years of requests to choose a nickname for WMHA teams as Windsor Minor became the JUNIOR SPITFIRES. In 2000, the WMHA logo was copyrighted; any sponsor of the WMHA can use the WMHA logo. For the 2014-15 season the WMHA Travel Uniforms reverted back to the black/white/kelly green jerseys after many years of red/white/blue for Travel jerseys.

## **Sponsors**

Have you ever seen some company or organization's name on the back of your youngster's hockey sweater and wondered who they were or why their name is there? Those are sponsors of WMHA and pay a set fee to Windsor Minor to have their name on those shirts. Sponsors are very important to the financial well being of the league. For example, money generated by the collection of sponsor fees, in the 1998-99 budget, account for 7.5% of the total revenue of the association. Without this money, each player would have to pay an extra \$35.00 this year to maintain our program. The support of all sponsors is greatly appreciated by all involved in Windsor Minor.

We had six sponsors that were with us for 25 years or more. AKO, MIC MAC CLUB and THE WINDSOR ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (WAA) have been supporting us since at least 1954. NANTAIS SPORT SHOP and CLUB 240 joined in the sixties and WAA started in 1973, their first year of existence.

For quite a few years, they have been major sponsors in the organization. They have sponsored multiple travel teams each year. The WMHA has been very fortunate to benefit from the generosity of the Windsor Choristers & Club 240 for many years.

## **Safety**

Windsor Minor Hockey Association has always been very concerned about the safety of the players, coaches and all others that make up the hockey program. It has long had



**established guidelines and expectations in regards to the behaviour of the people involved. Players and coaches have been dealt suspensions more severe than those recommended by the OMHA and other governing bodies in regards to violent and dangerous conduct. Repeat offenders have been handed penalties of one year suspensions and on several occasions players and coaches have been banished from WMHA for life.**

**In addition to playing rules put in place for the well being of all involved, Windsor Minor has been a pioneer in making the use of safety equipment mandatory. As early as 1958 the organization exhibited its concern for the protection of its players when it purchased thirty helmets to be used by the players during games. These helmets were kept at Windsor Arena, the only arena used by the midget league that was Windsor Minor, for the participants use and benefit during games.**

**For the 1973-74 season, external mouth guards were made mandatory in all divisions of the association. Helmets approved by the CSA were mandated for the players participating during the 1975-76 year, one full season before the OMHA did likewise. Players wearing approved wire face masks were no longer required to wear the external mouth guards. Two seasons later, 1977-78, WMHA received a Wintario grant it applied for, and all players received vouchers to be applied against the purchase of OMHA approved wire masks.**

**For the 1984 -85 season, the league strongly urged all competitors to obtain and use neck protection. At the same time it wrote a letter urging the OMHA to adopt a policy in regards to neck guards. This rule was put in place again after WMHA had its policy in place.**

**During the mid-nineties the association, after the death of a coach in Sandwich West Minor Hockey from a fall on the ice, enacted regulations concerning the safety of its personnel on the ice. No one under sixteen years of age was allowed to coach or help run practices. Helmets were a must for all coaches under eighteen. All others were advised about the risk factors**

**involved and urged to wear helmets. Now, everyone on the ice must wear a helmet.**

**With an alarming increase in neck and back injuries across the hockey world, the organization, for the 1995-96 season, implemented the Safety Toward Other Players (STOP) program. This program was initiated by Kevin Stubbington who was a WMHA Coach at the time. In this policy, players and coaches signed Fair Play Pledges, acknowledging an awareness of the dangers involved in some actions during the hockey games and promising to play the game in a cautious way so as to not to put any participant in risk of injury. As well, STOP signs were placed on the back of each sweater, above the numbers, as a reminder of the dangers of checking from behind. As others became aware of the program, requests for information began to arrive. In the fall, The Sports Network (TSN) came to Windsor to tape a game and to do a report on the success of this endeavour. After it was broadcast, many more requests for information came in from organizations all across the country. It is now mandatory for all OMHA teams and others to have the STOP sign.**

**When incidents of hazing and sexual abuse of players across the country began to make news, the need for an abuse policy became clear. While governing bodies were concerned with the wider issues involved, it fell to local organizations to develop policies that would work for them. WMHA's policy, which included educating players, coaches and parents about what was acceptable behaviour, quickly became a model for other organizations. Hockey and other sport organizations across Canada requested copies.**

**The education of the people included what is abuse, verbal, emotional, physical and sexual. All coaches and managers were required to obtain police clearances or sign volunteer forms stating they have no record and would get the police clearance if requested. Periodic reports would be done on all personnel in regards to conduct during games and practices. Practices would be monitored to ensure that all safety measures were in place. Every team in the Novice Division & House League**

**Divisions have a minimum of 23 games & practices.**

**Windsor Minor Hockey Association intends to continue its history of ensuring a safe environment for everyone partaking in its programs.**

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**WMHA Life Members**

**Fred Baldwin  
Ray Bocchini  
Jim Campbell  
Father Ronald Cullen  
Mike Dugal  
Jack Dulmage  
Marilyn Fahey  
Margie Grondin  
Jim Hogan  
Al Iatonna  
Robert “Knobby” Knudsen  
Dean Lapierre  
Barrie MacDonald  
Siro Martinello  
Rick Murdoch  
Dean Pare  
Rick Pare  
Dave Pickford  
Wilf “Butch” Rivard  
Kevin Stubbington  
Harvey Teno**

## WMHA Champions & Finalists

The Modern Era of the WMHA started in the 1969-70 season. Since that time the WMHA has won 10 OMHA Championships and has been a finalist 20 times.

Year	Classification	Division	Result
1969	AAA	Pee Wee	Finalist
1970	AAA	Juvenile	Finalist
1972	AAA	Midget	Finalist
1973	AAA	Midget Minor	Finalist
1973	AAA	Midget	Finalist
1975	AAA	Juvenile	Champion
1976	AAA	Midget Minor	Finalist
1980	AAA	Bantam	Finalist
1980	AAA	Midget Minor	Finalist
1986	AAA	Pee Wee Minor	Finalist
1990	AAA	Pee Wee	Finalist
1992	AE1	Midget	Champion
1993	AE1	Bantam	Champion
1996	AAA	Pee Wee	Finalist
2001	AAA	Juvenile	Finalist
2003	AAA	Juvenile	Finalist
2004	AAA	Juvenile	Finalist
2006	AAA	Juvenile	Finalist
2007	A	Atom Minor	Champion
2007	A	Juvenile	Champion
2008	AAA	Juvenile	Finalist
2008	AA	Novice	Champion
2008	AA	Pee Wee Minor	Finalist
2009	AA	Novice	Champion
2011	AE	Midget	Finalist
2013	AA	Novice	Champion
2015	AE	Novice	Champion
2016	AE	Midget	Finalist
2016	AE	Novice	Finalist
2019	AE	Bantam	Champion