

**ON THE BALL!!!**

**The Manitoba Ball Hockey Association Newsletter**

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**Oohhhhhh...you play BAAALLL Hockey!!! - Jeff Dzikowicz**

Playing, coaching, officiating, captaining, volunteering, and the list goes on for the past 15 years of competitive organized ball hockey and the game still has the reputation, and stigma, of being "just" ball hockey. Often people look at the sport like it is the proverbial less developed brother of our beloved pastime of ice hockey. The funny thing is that the actual sport does not justify the lesser opinion of which is granted to it. Ball hockey may be one of the most intense, physically demanding sports out there. In fact due to the temperature of the facilities, hardness of the playing surface, and fact you cannot glide as

you can in ice hockey, coupled with much of the same strategies makes the game superior as a physical test and more demanding game to play.

The point however is not to take away from our frozen brethren, but to merely define and promote our game in a way that we can stand alone from it. When you play the game in front of a few thousand people in Newfoundland, or you here stories of parades for the world championships down the streets of Switzerland, or the fact it is one of the most popular sports in the Czech Republic, you start to have visions of how big this game can be. When Jason Spezza, one of the top players in

the NHL singles out ball hockey as one of the key contributors to his world class stick handling ability you start to look at the scope of the game. Most importantly you look at the constant increases in the cost of sport in this country, and the fact Ball Hockey is on the lower end of the spectrum in terms of costs and I see nothing but opportunity. We need to shift our mindset as a membership, from "just ball hockey" to ball hockey one of the greatest sports out there. Right now Ball hockey is the 21st most popular sports in terms of participation in this country ahead of bowling, karate and rugby, and I see a time coming when it will be in the top 10, it is just a matter of belief.

**Special points of interest:**

- Brant Cook won the CBHA, Manitoba Player of the Year
- Manitoba, then represented by the Grasshoppers, won a National Championship
- The 1st Annual Ray Frost 3 on 3 tournament raised \$1000.00 for Team Manitoba
- The Summer Ball Hockey League has its largest participation base ever!!!!

**COED Ball Hockey Growing and Growing – Kelly Huff**

One of the increases in our association came out of nowhere, well actually out of the mix of men and women to make ball hockey teams. Coed ball hockey is thriving, and we foresee a time when there will be almost as many coed teams as men's teams, We have seen a mass growth in coed sponge hockey, and that seems to be stimulating growth in the

summer version. It may be an increase in women's overall hockey participation, but whatever it is, it is fantastic to see. It is also great to see the development of the competitive side of coed, and not just the participatory side. It is great to meet all of our members

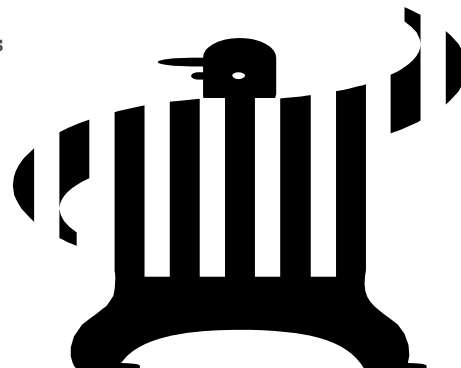


needs and have a variety of options on the table when people are interested in our sport.

## IT'S OFFICIAL!!! The MBHA Ref's Report - Kevin Hughes

The first 3 weeks are at a close and it seems that we have been getting tremendous feedback in regards to the new rules that have been incorporated with the focus being on increasing speed of game and taking away the body and stick work. Most teams seem to love it, but there are still a handful that have not quite adjusted, so they better get used to it as it will be called like this the whole season and into the playoffs.

I have also had the most positive feedback as we have ever seen in regards to the performance of our referees this year! Both Leon Ledgister, the officials technical director for Manitoba Ball Hockey and myself, the head official have been out and evaluating our referees in the first week and will continue to do so throughout the year to help them be prepared to call all games! We are also holding a clinic the last weekend in May at Sport Manitoba to help get our officials ready for the stretch drive and into the playoffs!



Please check [www.manitobaballhockey.com](http://www.manitobaballhockey.com) for exact dates, times and locations as this clinic is open to anyone wishing to attend and learn what the officials have to go through and that is also when you can find more about the direction ball hockey is moving!

If there is ever any feedback that you would like to provide, please e-mail [mbhal@hotmail.com](mailto:mbhal@hotmail.com)

### TITLE: "Testing 1, 2, 3....Is this thing on?" - Joe Cefali

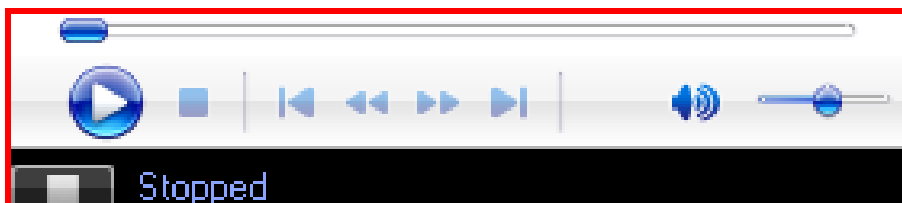
Have you heard the latest MBHA News? I mean, LITERALLY! New to this year's MBHA Website is the launching of yet another weekly feature - MBHA PodCast Radio! This gives regular visitors to the site yet another opportunity to hear the latest news, updates, rumours, and events straight from the interviewees mouths. Plus, they're all downloadable so you won't miss an episode -- like you needed another excuse to come and visit the website!!

How did this little brainchild come about? You see, the MBHA Webmaster is a true geek at heart, and after listening to hours of internet podcasts and satellite radio broadcasts, it dawned on him -- "hey...why can't we do this on our site?". So, after a couple of initial emails and digging out some audio equipment from the back of the closet, MBHA PodCast Radio was introduced to the masses -- and what an introduction! Initial response to the PodCasts have been overwhelmingly positive (it makes you wonder why we didn't do this before), and the page itself has become one of the more popular visits on the site (take that MouthPiece!!)

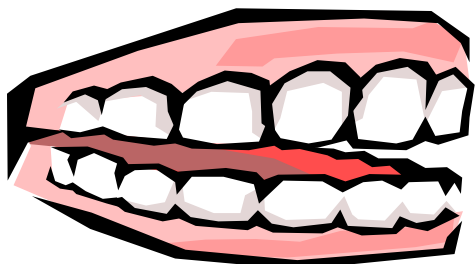
But alas, none of it could be possible without the interviewees themselves, and all of those loyal listeners emailing theStatsman@yahoo.com with your PodCast ideas (insert shameless plug for ideas here). Keep those emails coming...thestatsman loves the feedback, and who knows -- if he receives enough of them he will devote an entire episode to responding to your emails "on the air".

So dust off those keyboards, clean out your ears, and get ready to "listen" to what's new in the MBHA with theStatsman on MBHA PodCast Radio -- <http://www.manitobaballhockey.com/podcasts>.

--- from, thestatsman@yahoo.com.  
aka. MBHA Webmaster.



## THE REPORTER



We are currently one quarter of the way through the 2008 MBHA Summer Ball Hockey season and it seems like a good time to take a look at what we are seeing so far and also familiarize you with some of the newer teams in the league.

A few weeks back before the start of the season, I counted 18 new teams throughout the various divisions and after having the opportunity to see most of them play the past 3 weeks, I realized a few things. Some were completely new to Ball Hockey, some were just simply a name change and some were a combination of teams from the previous year which I'd like to talk a little more about. In division 2, the Killer Whales include several players from last season's Cereal Killers and then there is Team Redemption who consists of former Reds and

Hammers. In division 3 we have Brokenhead who I'm not completely familiar with, but I did notice that veteran Garnett Desjarlais is one of the leaders on this squad. In division 4 we have the Insta-Rent Warriors who are over from the MBHA's winter league and also have several members from last season's Lightning and Yellow Jackets. The Blades of Steel and Mezzanine combined to form the Dead Rabbits, and finally the Timberwolves also have a few ex Blades on their roster.

To this stage of the season, 6 teams retain perfect records including the Hosers, Hooligans, Devils, Insta-Rent Warriors, Blues and Stars, who are all very well balanced and seem to be deep at all positions. It will be interesting to see in the upcoming weeks if teams who rely heavily upon their stars can continue to contend with teams that feature a balanced attack, or if team defences can constantly shut down skilled scorers.

Lastly, one of the biggest variances I've noticed this season over lasts is the size of the benches. With the exception a of a few, overall we are seeing several teams with 3 full lines on a consistent basis and looking very organized, which is something that will be beneficial down the stretch if it can be maintained for the balance of the season.

To stay informed throughout the season, be sure to check the main Summer Ball Hockey page for daily scores & game recaps. You can also catch me on a future Podcast radio broadcast. We look forward to some great hockey in the upcoming weeks.



## In the Box—With Stu Swanson

Hello people in Ball Hockey Land. It's time again for me to rant on about what I've seen so far in the 2008 Ball Hockey season. In case you're wondering, unlike the MIA Mouthpiece this year, I will not be mentioning any names, but only because I prefer to protect the dumb and the stupid, and not ridicule them publicly. So far this year I've seen a lot of good hockey! It's been fast and skilled, and I think most of the teams are buying into the new rules and adjusting well. Kudos goes to all Players, Coaches and Officials and MBHA staff.

What I have noticed this year however, is a lot of lazy players, especially in Divisions 1 & 2. These are the Competitive Divisions, and such players should be playing competitively from goal line to goal line. Far too often I've seen one way players that only play in the offensive zones. What makes it worse, is when such players make a bad pass or lose the ball to the other team, they give up completely! They allow the other team to turn the play around, and in most cases it's their man that they should have been covering that scores the goal!

Remember guys, Team Manitoba Coaches are watching these Divisions closely. If you have any aspiration of playing for a National Championship Medal, leave your egos in the locker room, and play the entire rink! Even if you don't play for Team Toba, it will only make you, and your teammates better players. That is it for now. Keep your heads up and your sticks down and let's see some Great Hockey!



## CTO to Make Serious Run at Westerns Hardware—Bernie Young

CTO Westerns the sequel.

CTO after playing hard in Kelowna last summer and building a team that became a family we realized we had some work to do in order to improve on our finish from last year.

Taking a page out of Team Manitoba's book we knew we had to be the hardest working team in order to be successful. There's been great dedication from the guys on the team to maintain their fitness during the offseason and participating in many of the leagues around the city to keep in shape. CTO started the year with a few practices focused solely on conditioning and skill development. Then leading into the season we just wanted to get familiarized with the rink and the playing surface and had some scrimmages with the Cereal Killers. Looking back at last year's Western's, special teams has been a major factor in the success of teams at the Western's and National level. This is one of the areas that CTO is looking to improve on as well as overall team defense. The team has another year to gel and the chemistry has been great and we're definitely looking to bring back a medal this year.

**"It is great to see the competitive side of the sport grow, we were on our way about 10 years ago but took a step back, I really think we are back on track!" - Kelly Huff**

## Coaches Corner - Jeff Dzikowicz Team Manitoba

Last Year at this time the Team Manitoba Program had been fundraising for 6 months, had

meetings too numerous to count and had already started practicing. That was last year, that was a necessity to get the fledgling program off the ground. We knew going in the first steps would be the hardest, and then once we learned how to walk, we would be off and running. In year 2, for the integrity of the program, we knew it had to be wide open to all to truly get the best and most committed players in the MBHA on to the team for Vancouver. May 20, 21, 22, and 26 will see those players step to the forefront to take part in what I like to call Psycho II.

Psycho, is what a member of the silver medalist Montreal Black Knights referred to us as during our first game in New Brunswick in 2007, stating very loudly, and with the sound of exhaustion on his breath "these guys are Psycho, they never quit". Our captain, Wayne Erstelle, brought that to the teams attention and our team mantra was spawned. This year, the coaching staff, of myself, Rudy Loepp and Kelly Huff, along with our team manager Rob Karpiak and team trainer/physiotherapist, want to build on the Psycho label. We saw what it took to be successful, what type of player we would need, and most importantly the mind set we would need to improve on our 4th place 2007 finish. Psycho does not mean uncontrollable, undisciplined, and crazy in the context of our team, it means relentless to the point that you would have to be nuts to be able to keep up the pace that we will require, which is what our 2007 team was prepared to do. I am extremely confident that our 2008 Team Manitoba team will have the foundation to improve and get the medal that our association covets.

Do you or someone you know have what it takes to be a part of the program? Firstly I believe the entire association and all of the players, volunteers, and staff in it are "part" of the program. It is great when captains, volunteers, refs and past players are encouraging others to take part in the tryouts. It is great that players from last year are actively recruiting new people into the sport to get them to be part of it, and as well grow the sport. Your help and encouragement do not go unnoticed and are greatly appreciated. Secondly, ALL players should give it a shot, you never know what some of you are capable of, and what role we may want filled. I am often asked the question "what are my odds of making it?" or "You must have the team pretty much picked, eh?" The answers to those questions are; your odds depend on who and how many people tryout, and "no" I do not have the team picked. There are players from last years team, who will be trying out as well, that people will be hard pressed to beat out and off of the team, but there is no commitment to them at all and they will have to compete for their spots. Much like the players who make this years team, may have an inside edge for next years selections, someone who you have seen play at that level, if tied in fitness and ability may get an inside edge on someone I am unfamiliar with, but remember, there are 25 potential spots on a team, and all you have to do is get one of them.

In saying that, we will be looking for the skill to play the game, hockey sense, strength, fitness, good chemistry and speed, speed, speed. This promises to be an exciting year at the Nationals, with 14 teams taking place, and us going in with our highest seeding ever, ranked 4th. We will not be taking anyone by surprise, and we will have a lot of new faces, but we know what we are capable of, and that is a medal.

**"This was an awesome experience, one I will never forget, it is awesome to see a group of players with next to no prior connections come together and share success!!!" - Rudy Loepp Assistant Coach**

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[www.manitobaballhockey.com](http://www.manitobaballhockey.com)

## **Team Manitoba Tryouts**

**Notre Dame Arena**

**Tuesday—May 20 10:20 PM**

**Wednesday—May 21 10:20 PM**

**Thursday—May 22 10:20 PM**

**Monday—May 26th Location and time TBA**

**Check out [www.manitobaballhockey.com](http://www.manitobaballhockey.com) for more info or register with your timekeeper.**

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### **Manitoba Ball Hockey Hall of Fame**

As this is the 30th season of Ball Hockey in Manitoba. The MBHA is proud to announce the introduction of Manitoba Ball Hockey Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame will be recognizing Players, Coaches, Executives, and Officials, based on abilities, sportsmanship, character, contribution to their team or teams, and contribution to Ball Hockey in general.

Keep an eye on the website for upcoming announcements regarding the Hall Of Fame, and its soon to be inducted members.

If you have any questions regarding the MBHA Hall of fame, please contact the Manitoba Ball Hockey Association at [mbha@mts.net](mailto:mbha@mts.net)

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### **MBHA Playoff Format**

Division 1 top 4 teams qualify

Division 2 top 6 teams qualify

Division 3 top 8 teams qualify

Division 4 top 8 teams qualify

Womens top 8 teams qualify 1st to 4th go A play-offs 5th to 8th go B Playoffs

Coed top 8 teams qualify 1st to 4th go A playoffs 5th to 8th go B Playoffs