



Appendix B – President’s Report: 2023-2024 CGHA Accomplishments and Challenges

Accomplishments

Enhancing Our Facilities and Programs

- 1. Flames Room Re-Development:**
 - We successfully transformed the Flames Room from a storage area into a beautiful, functional space for teams to use for meetings, game reviews, and more. This is now a key asset for the CGHA community.
- 2. Advocating for Better Ice and Facilities:**
 - Advocated for access to Rickard Pad A and secured a premium ice surface and an upgraded dressing room. This advocacy has improved the experience for our teams and players.
 - Presented to the Clarington Council about the growing need for more ice pads, reflecting the significant growth in women’s hockey in our region.
- 3. Collaboration with Other Associations:**
 - Worked with other Clarington hockey associations to improve ice allocation and foster a collaborative approach across organizations.
 - Met with presidents of other associations to create consistency across OWSHA programs, ensuring better coordination for everyone involved.

Player and Coach Development Initiatives

- 1. Mental Performance Training:**
 - We rolled out mental performance training for all rep players, equipping them with the tools they need to handle the pressures of the game, both physically and mentally.
- 2. Coach Mentorship and Selection:**
 - Implemented a coach mentorship program and a transparent coach selection process, using independent evaluations and a coach metric to ensure fairness. This has helped raise the standards for our coaching teams.

Financial Stability and New Funds

1. **Tax Filings Completed:**

- After three years of effort, CGHA is now up to date on all tax filings (18 years) marking a significant step toward long-term financial stability.

2. **Bursary and Financial Need Funds:**

- Established a bursary fund and a financial need fund to help families cover hockey-related expenses, ensuring that financial barriers don't stand in the way of players' participation.

Successful Tournaments and Events

1. Hosted successful events, including **Clarington's largest hockey tournament** and the **FirstShift program** in partnership with Hockey Canada. We also organized community-building events like the **Pep Rally** and **Signing Event**, showcasing the talent and enthusiasm within CGHA.
2. This year we are hosting Western University and Ottawa at the end of September and will provide Q&A for parents and athletes.

House League and Volunteer Recruitment

1. Recruited **House League director** to help enhance the House League program, which has already seen improvements under her leadership. Despite challenges, we are committed to ensuring that the House League gets the attention it deserves.

Challenges and Frequent Questions

1. What is High Performance?

In other centres, **High Performance** programs are often defined by elements such as **mental performance training**, off-ice and on-ice development beyond standard practices, and additional opportunities like **university tours**. These programs may also include features like **nicer jerseys** and specialized resources for elite players.

At CGHA, we've taken a unique approach. While many associations reserve these benefits exclusively for their High Performance teams, we believe in offering **comprehensive development** to all of our **Rep teams**. This means that key aspects such as **mental performance training**, advanced skill development, and structured off-ice training are available not only to our High Performance teams but to all of our Rep players.

In doing so, we ensure that every athlete in our program, regardless of the level they're playing at, has access to the tools they need to improve and reach their potential. However, we also recognize that this broader offering may dilute the traditional exclusivity of High Performance programs.

Moving forward, we're committed to continuously enhancing our **High Performance program**, refining it to meet the growing expectations of our players and families while maintaining our commitment to providing **elite development opportunities** across the board.

2. Challenge: Switching Jersey Providers (2022-2023)

Two years ago, we made the decision to switch to a new jersey provider. This coincided with our **rebranding efforts** and the launch of a new website, which made the timing feel ideal. However, shortly after transitioning to the new provider, we encountered significant issues. Over **150 complaints** were filed regarding the **quality, timing, and accuracy** of the jerseys. The situation worsened when the black jerseys arrived with an incorrect oversized neck that was not what we had ordered.

At this point, we had two options:

1. **Continue with the flawed jerseys** and force hundreds of families to purchase them, or
2. **Make a difficult, but necessary, change** to ensure future orders met the high standards our members expect.

Leadership and Decision-Making Process:

As a **transformational leader**, I recognized the need to address this issue swiftly and decisively. Despite knowing that the decision might not be popular, I took the necessary steps to engage with members, hear their concerns, and present the options to the board. Through **conflict resolution strategies**, we discussed the benefits and drawbacks of each choice, and in the end, the board voted in favor of switching to a new provider.

Result: Roys Enterprises and Improved Satisfaction

Today, we are in our second year with **Roys Enterprises**, and the results speak for themselves. Compared to the over 150 complaints we received with the previous provider, we have experienced **almost no complaints** with Roys. The jerseys now reflect the quality and professionalism we want for our players, and this outcome demonstrates the importance of making hard decisions for the long-term benefit of the association.

3. Challenge: Governance and Policy Implementation

In any organization, a structured approach to governance is essential for ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability. During my time with CGHA, I have worked diligently to introduce a series of policies designed to formalize processes and protect the integrity of the association. These include:

- Volunteer Policy (CGHA-002)
- Sponsorship and Fundraising Policy (CGHA-003)
- Refund Policy (CGHA-004)
- Respect and Accountability Policy (CGHA-005)
- Equipment and Apparel Policy (CGHA-006)
- Resident Eligibility for Competitive/Rep Players Policy (CGHA-007)
- Conflict of Interest Policy (CGHA-008)
- Competitive Tryout Policy (CGHA-009)
- House League Team Selection Policy (CGHA-010)
- Inclusion Policy (CGHA-011)
- Privacy Policy (CGHA-012)

Additionally, I implemented a **Code of Conduct for board directors**, ensuring that all leaders are held to the highest standards.

4. Challenge: Resistance to Change and Misinformation

Before these policies were in place, many operations were unstructured, and some individuals benefited from the lack of formal rules. The introduction of structure has, understandably, caused resistance among some who were accustomed to the old ways. Unfortunately, this resistance has manifested in the spread of misinformation, with claims that I or the board randomly choose when to follow policies.

However, this is simply **not true**. **Organizational Change Theory** teaches us that when new systems and rules are introduced, there will always be a period of adjustment and resistance, particularly from those who were comfortable with the previous, less structured approach. It's important to acknowledge that changes are difficult, but they are necessary for the long-term health and success of the association.

Addressing Policy Deviations and Flexibility

At times, policies need to be **amended or temporarily adjusted** to meet evolving needs or unforeseen challenges. For example, this year during tryouts, we faced external pressure from Oshawa's recruitment of our players, combined with the natural attrition of players at the U15 level. In response to these factors, along with concerns raised by a coach who did

not receive a team, we were forced to allow players to attend tryouts mid-session or late, deviating from our **Competitive Tryout Policy**.

While I personally believe in adhering strictly to policy, it's important to recognize that flexibility is sometimes necessary. **Transformational Leadership** is about adapting in the face of new challenges, and in this case, after thorough discussion and with **board majority approval**, we made the decision to deviate from the policy to mitigate the loss of players and ensure fairness in the tryout process.

Result: Policy-Driven Governance and Fair Decision-Making

Throughout these changes, my focus has always been on the **long-term stability** of the CGHA. By introducing and maintaining these policies, we are ensuring that decisions are not made arbitrarily, but are based on a foundation of fairness and transparency. When deviations occur, they are not made lightly and are always approved by the board, ensuring the decisions reflect the best interests of the entire association.

As we continue to build on this structured approach, I remain committed to upholding the policies we've put in place, while also maintaining the flexibility needed to address the unique challenges that arise in youth sports.

5. Challenge: Coach Selection Process and Previous Practices

In the past, the coach selection process often lacked transparency and structure. I recall sitting on interview panels where it was made clear that some interviews were merely a formality—a **courtesy interview**—and the decision had essentially already been made. This approach did not respect the time of our volunteers or the commitment of our coaches, and it failed to ensure that the best candidates were chosen for the role.

To address this, we needed a way to measure and select candidates fairly and consistently, rather than relying on personal relationships or who the board members knew.

Solution: Introduction of a Matrix-Based Evaluation System

To bring structure and fairness to the process, we applied a **matrix-based evaluation system** similar to the one used in the selection of firefighters. This matrix evaluates coaching candidates based on a wide range of factors, including:

- **Coaching experience**
- **Credentials and certifications**
- **Playing experience**
- **Parent feedback**
- **Team performance**

After each candidate is evaluated through the matrix, the highest-ranking individuals are then invited to participate in a detailed interview. These interviews include both behavioral and tactical questions, ensuring that we assess not only their knowledge of the game but also their ability to lead and develop a team effectively.

Result: Fair and Comprehensive Coach Selection

While I understand that not everyone will be satisfied with the outcome, especially those who were not selected, this process has greatly improved the fairness and transparency of our coach selection. By using a **data-driven, objective approach**, we've moved beyond the days when personal relationships influenced decisions. This ensures that we are choosing the best coach for each team based on a variety of relevant factors.

Situational Leadership Theory teaches us that the best leaders adapt their decision-making approach to the situation at hand. In this case, we needed to move away from informal practices and create a more structured, merit-based process. This shift wasn't easy, but it was necessary for the long-term integrity of our association.

Addressing Concerns

I recognize that some members may feel disappointed when they are not selected as a coach, and this can lead to frustration or negative perceptions. However, I assure you that every effort has been made to select the best candidates for the job through a comprehensive, multi-faceted assessment process—one that values merit and fairness above all else. This system is more rigorous and transparent than anything that was in place before, and I believe it sets the standard for how we move forward as an organization.

6. Challenge: Player Attrition and Recruitment

This year, we faced several external and internal challenges contributing to higher-than-usual player movement. Some of the key factors include:

1. **Active Recruiting from Oshawa:** Promises were made to players about opportunities to play at a higher level, which enticed some to leave.
2. **No Cap on Clarington/Import Players in Oshawa:** A new policy this year allowed Oshawa to recruit an unlimited number of Clarington and import players, further impacting our player retention.
3. **Influential Coach Not Receiving a Team:** An influential coach who did not receive a team contributed to a **negative narrative**, which exacerbated dissatisfaction.
4. **Conflicting Coach Preferences:** A separate group of players and families supported another coach, which added even more tension and discontent within the association.

5. **Jersey and Tryout Process Discontent:** A group of players and families from the previous season remained upset over the jersey issues and the tryout process, particularly the decision to uphold a policy that did not allow late entry for a player when other players had been turned away. When the issue was revisited, the board voted to maintain the policy, which created frustration and added to the "perfect storm."

Despite all of these challenges, including removing one Tier 4 team at the U15 level, we've maintained **strong player numbers**, consistent with previous years.

Data-Driven Results: Rebuilding and Stability

For the **2023-2024 season**, here's the data to show our stability:

- **608 Players Registered**
- **291 Staff Registrations**
- **38 Rosters Created**
- **81 Outgoing Transfers** balanced by **39 Incoming Transfers**
- **365 Tryout Passports Purchased**

Despite reducing the number of U15 teams, the overall numbers remain steady, a testament to the resilience of our association and the continued interest in our programs.

Metrics	2022-2023	2023-2024
Total Players Registered	615	608
Staff Registrations	280	291
Rosters Created	37	38
Tryout Passports Purchased	375	365
Outgoing Transfers	72	81
Incoming Transfers	42	39

7. Challenge: Fraudulent Activity in the Community

This year, we faced an unexpected challenge with fraudulent coupons being sold within the community. We acted swiftly and worked closely with DRPS to address the issue. While this added complexity to our operations, we prioritized protecting the integrity of the association and maintaining trust within our community.

8. Challenge: Ice Time

Ice time allocation continues to be a recurring challenge, particularly with concerns around early and late slots, as well as overall availability. We have been actively advocating with the municipality to secure better time slots and more ice allocation. While progress has been made, this is an area that requires ongoing attention, and I am committed to ensuring we receive the necessary support for our teams moving forward.

9. Challenge: Volunteer Shortages and Role Overload

This year, the lack of volunteer support placed additional strain on our operations. In order to maintain continuity, I took on several roles beyond my position, including handling communications, updating the website, managing social media, and providing disciplinary support. These responsibilities often required over 20 hours of my time each week. While I am proud of the progress we've made, this situation highlights the need for more volunteer involvement to sustain our momentum.

Looking Forward

Moving into the next season, we remain committed to addressing these challenges head-on while continuing to build on our successes. We will prioritize volunteer recruitment, enhancing player development, and advocating for better ice time and resources. As always, we thank our community for their continued support and look forward to a brighter and stronger future for CGHA.