

## **North Branch Mite Committee**

### Monthly Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2010

**Meeting was called to order at 7:45pm.**

**Committee Members Present:** Lisa Isaacson, Scott Hannah, Mike Pizzuti, Tim Hink, Ray Croal, Nichole Holman, Barbara Boelk

**Members Present:** Tom Garin, Don Schmitt, Ryan Coleman, Nick Miller, Derek Green, Todd Harvey, Daniel Lesman, Tim Cashill, Paige Lee

### **Mite Program Suggestions**

- Derek – Likes the idea of tryouts to group kids by skill sets. Feels that the 5 on 5 game evaluations is a good idea.
- Barb – Thought all the coaches were outstanding last season. All coaches were very patient and tried to give each child individual attention. Would like to try to get the kids together before the official practice to get them placed with kids at the same or closer skill levels. Are we talking about skating skills or stick skills? We are looking at both stick and skating skills.

Barb does not feel that all the evaluations have to be the same for each of the Mite level teams. She would like to see some of the parents come out to skate for some type of an open skate night.

- Danny – Likes the evaluations and would like to do more of this off of the ice. He would like to get the coaches together more often to discuss ideas.
- Todd – We have limited ice time, so when do we have time to do these pre-evaluations? Maybe we need to look at making a lower and upper level A Mite team instead of moving some kids up to B Mites when they were not ready.
- Paige Lee – There are options for outdoor dry-land options. We have only 45 traveling skaters. We need to build our kids up so they are ready to move up to the squirt level when they reach that age level.
- Ryan – There are always going to be kids that are going to be higher scoring kids. These kids need to learn how to help their team mates work together and become better as a team instead of making it an individual sport. Evaluations are good to keep them in the competitive mode, however, we need to make this fun and allow them to play with their friends and still keep learning new skill sets to get them ready for the squirt level. Feels that we should look at having 2 C teams next year and he would like to see all of these kids share ice during practices. Feels we really need to promote team sportsmanship

between teammates. Feels that if we cannot create a D team that we do not make a D team and build the confidence by having 2 C Mite teams.

- Don – We cannot take away all of our really good players from our lower level teams and still be competitive. Feels that having a higher confidence level can also help in learning. Feels there are other associations that have teams that are very competitive at the C Mite level. Feels we should mix all the kids together during the evaluations, but do not get carried away with moving kids around in the different mite levels.
- Scott Hannah – Would like to see 2 C Mite teams for next season. Believes we should have skated 2 C Mite teams last year and it may have been a better season. Can evaluations be done 2 weeks after kids are already on the ice?
- Mike Pizzuti – The evaluations should try to place the players the best we can. We need to make sure our players are progressing and learning the required skills needed to prepare them for Squirts.
- Nick Miller – D Mite Coach from last season. Level of play needs to be looked at from what level they enter into the season and where they are at the end of season. If we bring all of our players down to a lower level, we are only making it harder for our players as they move to the traveling level. Nick does not agree with the 50/50 split with 2 C Mite teams as expressed by Ryan Coleman. He feels the span of talent is too large and makes it much more difficult during practices to make sure everyone is improving without losing some of the other skaters that are less skilled. We need to evaluate our numbers before we go into evaluations so we have an idea of how to group the kids next season.
- Ray – Level of play is a key factor in deciding where we place kids in the mite levels. Ray coached A Mite team and there were different styles of coaching among the different team coaches. Feels we need to help coach up some of the players that are falling behind the other players. We have talked about getting our High School hockey coach involved in helping to building our coaching curriculum. Would like to have a pre-season learn-to-skate and have the coaches watch them play to get an idea of their skill levels. He would like to have a pre-skate as part of the season and then look at having the individual skills evaluation before placing the kids at levels and teams.
- Tom – Everyone would like to find out what is best for all of our kids. All skate together by age? Strait evaluations and then split? Skate before evaluations? We are limited on ice time and we currently do not have the resources to have all of these pre-skates before the evaluation process. We can do evaluations without any of the parents even knowing about it. We need to group the kids together where they belong. We are not making any decisions tonight, but this will help us come up with a strategy going forward for next season. Coaching curriculum and standardization has been requested for several years. We do need to get more organized to standardize the coaching curriculum at all levels of Mites. May look at putting together a book for each Mite level. Tom may ask for what drills are used by our current coaches and use these to start creating these curriculum books at each level.

We do have control over who our Mite teams play. We can play more of the smaller associations that are at our same skill level if needed. It is good to play the bigger districts, but maybe we limit the number of these games we play. Tom does not feel that we can group these kids too early. There are way too many changes that the kids make over the summer by participating in other skating/hockey clinics to make these kinds of decisions earlier in the season.

- Tim Hink – Mite hockey is about learning the stick and skating skills. When we evaluate at the Mite level we need to evaluate based on skills and skills alone. Thinks evaluations are a good thing to find the kids skill level so the kids are learning the same skills during practices. Feels that the skills are more important than scoring a lot of goals. How do we look at our initiation and A mite teams? We are going to have 1<sup>st</sup> volunteer coaches at our initiation level that have no coaching experience and need some instruction on what drills need to be done during the season at this level.

Do we want to try and do an in-house program for our 1<sup>st</sup> year initiation skaters? You have more flexibility to move kids around from A and Initiation levels so they play with kids at their same skill levels. This does really come down to numbers of players at this lower level.

- Tim Cashill – Feels that our coaches are willing to take the time to work with our kids instead of just scoring goals at this level of hockey. How do we keep these numbers of mite players and have them continue onto the traveling levels? We need to make hockey fun for your kids.
- Todd – Look at putting together a practice book for each skill or mite level. This would be a full coaching curriculum for each step through the Mite program.

There is a big misconception by some parents that kids that want to start hockey at ages 7-9 years of age should not even try to skate for the association as they will be too far behind. The association is willing to have any player register and the coaches will work with these kids to pull them up to speed with the other kids in their age group.

What tasks can we take away to keep this moving forward?

- Do we need to send something out now and the next Mite Meeting?
- Send any comments to Ray Croal or Tom Garin.
- Do we look at putting out another online survey on collecting ideas?
- We should start looking at a layout to decide how much time we will need on the ice for evaluations to place kids at the correct skill level.
- Do we look at having some of the older level coaches mentor some of our 1<sup>st</sup> year coaches.

### **Parade Participation**

The Midsummer Days parade will take place on June 20<sup>th</sup>. Ray Croal is leading the effort to get a group of kids willing to participate in this parade, hand out treats to the crowd and promote the hockey association. This event is online on DIBS and you can sign up and receive volunteer credits for attending.

Ray did propose that we have all the kids that participate wear their “Build it and They Will Skate” T-shirts.

We are looking at handing out freezes at this event.

**Meeting ended at 10:00pm**