

U11 Competitive Report – 2024-25

I'm pleased to report on the U11 competitive season for 2024-25.

The season was a success. Our teams performed admirably, particularly considering that the number of U11 registrants was disappointingly low and neighbouring associations had substantially greater player pools from which to draw. Most importantly, our teams showed terrific development over the season, and our kids played the game the right way, had fun, and formed lifelong friendships.

The season began with a smooth tryout process. Almost without exception, the participants and parents were fully respectful of the Association's impartial and structured approach to selecting teams. Many thanks to Tim, Kendall, and the evaluators who worked so diligently.

I am aware of very few behavioural and disciplinary issues on our four competitive teams. This is a testament to the great character of our players, coaches, and parents.

Our AA team was the most successful of our four teams, finishing the regular season in second place and nearly making the final four in the provincial qualifying and league playoffs. They were well-coached and showed consistent improvement over the season. Three of the team's offensive leaders were first-year players, which bodes well for our top group next season.

Our A team also performed well in a highly competitive league and in the face of several injury challenges. The team also benefitted from excellent coaching. The first-year players are well-prepared to be leaders in U11 next season, and the players moving on to U13 have great potential to make a mark on competitive teams at that level next season.

The two B teams had positive, if at times challenging, seasons. Because of our low headcount in U11, the Association decided not to assign any skaters from tryouts to the C level. As a result, there was wide variance in skill level on our B teams. Despite that, the teams easily exceeded expectations. Both improved significantly over the season and had numerous impressive wins over the top teams in the B division. As with our AA and A teams, the coaching was excellent. Kudos to Mike Johnson for winning the Association's coaching award!

We began the season worried about goaltending. That concern factored into the decision to form only one AA team, a departure from the approach in recent years. In my view, our eight goalies proved that our worry was unfounded. Each made their teams and our Association proud, showing great ability and composure throughout the season. They should all be commended for great seasons.

I expect that goaltending and team composition will be among the important issues in the lead-up to next season. I am hopeful that we will have a healthier number of U11 registrants. A better number may make decisions on these issues easier.

On a final note, I thank our players, parents, and coaches for making the 2024-25 season memorable and positive. I look forward to a great 2025-26 season!

Go Hawks!

Joe