

Sackville Minor Hockey Association

Matthew Brown

Candidate for Vice President of Competitive

Introduction

Hockey has been a defining part of my life for more than 35 years.

I grew up as a Sackville Flyer, proudly representing our association at every level—from recreational hockey through to our top AAA programs. Having experienced SMHA as a player, and now as a parent, coach, and executive member, I have seen its evolution firsthand and remain proud to call myself a Flyer.

Over the past decade, I have coached in a variety of roles across multiple age groups. Most recently, I had the privilege of coaching one of our U11 AA teams. Our focus was on building a culture where players understood that improvement comes from effort, consistency, and accountability. We created an environment that was “all business” on the ice—competitive, focused, and committed to getting better—while still ensuring the game remained fun and rewarding. That group grew not only as players, but as teammates and individuals, carrying those lessons into how they prepared, competed, and supported one another.

Alongside coaching, I have spent the past three years serving as Vice President of the U5 and U7 divisions. During that time, my focus has been on providing a positive and welcoming introduction to hockey for young players and families. I am proud of the progress made at these levels and believe these early experiences are critical to long-term development, enjoyment, and retention in the game.

SMHA has made meaningful progress in recent years, and I believe we are well-positioned to further strengthen and elevate our competitive program as one of the largest associations in the province.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge Brad Aucoin for his leadership and commitment over the past two years as Vice President of Competitive.

I sincerely thank him for his dedication to the players, coaches, and families of SMHA, and I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

Vision Statement

My vision for competitive hockey within SMHA is to build a fair, transparent, development-focused, and sustainable program that gives every player and coach the opportunity to succeed while maintaining a strong and consistent culture of competitiveness across the association.

As one of the largest hockey associations in the province, SMHA has both the responsibility and opportunity to deliver a program that performs at every level. This includes challenging and showcasing our top teams appropriately, while ensuring meaningful development opportunities for all players across every tier of the program.

Competitive hockey should demand excellence, support growth, and give families confidence in the integrity of the process. Through strong leadership, clear communication, and consistent accountability, we can continue strengthening the foundation already in place and position SMHA for long-term success.

SMHA has made significant progress in developing its competitive program, with strong opportunity to continue building on that foundation.

As Vice President of Competitive, my focus would be to:

- Strengthen transparency and fairness in all processes
- Enhance player development pathways
- Support coaches and team staff
- Build sustainable systems for future leadership teams

- Foster a competitive culture grounded in respect, accountability, and growth
 - Ensure SMHA continues to set a strong standard for competitive hockey across the province
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Core Principles

1. Fair and Transparent Evaluations

A key responsibility of the Vice President of Competitive is ensuring all evaluations and team selections are fair, consistent, and professionally executed.

Over the past two years, SMHA has made important progress through:

- Implementation of evaluation software
- Increased visibility in the tryout process
- Structured evaluation flow charts
- Greater transparency in player movement and placement
- Tools that provide equal opportunity for players to demonstrate their abilities

My commitment is to continue refining these systems so evaluations remain objective, consistent, and trusted by the membership.

Key Priorities

- Continue improving evaluation structure and organization
- Ensure consistent standards across all divisions
- Increase communication around timelines and expectations
- Provide earlier and clearer information to families for better preparation

- Continue using technology and data to improve transparency and accountability
- Ensure goaltenders receive a fair, structured, and meaningful opportunity to showcase their abilities
- Ensure all players, including neurodiverse athletes, are provided equitable opportunity to participate and demonstrate their skills in a respectful and inclusive environment
- Maintain a balanced competitive structure that challenges teams across ALL levels to provide meaningful opportunity for development, competition, and growth

The goal is not simply team selection, but a process that builds trust through fairness and consistency.

2. Development-First Philosophy

Development and competitiveness must work together.

Our responsibility is to create an environment where players are:

- Challenged appropriately
- Supported consistently
- Developed intentionally
- Given opportunity to grow throughout the season

As a large association, SMHA must deliver competitive excellence at every level while maintaining a strong focus on long-term player development.

Success should be measured not only by wins and losses, but also by:

- Player progression
- Skill development
- Team identity
- Sportsmanship and respect

- Long-term engagement in the game

When development is prioritized, competitiveness follows naturally.

3. Coach Support and Education

Coaches are one of SMHA's most valuable assets.

To strengthen our program, we must continue investing in their development and ensuring they are supported throughout the season.

Proposed Initiatives

- Regular coaching education sessions
- Focus areas including:
 - Practice planning and structure
 - Bench management
 - Communication and leadership
 - Player development strategies
 - Culture building
 - Positive engagement with officials
 - Managing adversity and game situations
- Stronger mentorship and collaboration across divisions
- Improved communication and support systems for competitive team staff

Strong coaching leads to stronger players, stronger teams, and a stronger Association.

5. Communication and Accountability

Clear communication is essential to building trust.

Families, players, coaches, and volunteers deserve:

- Timely and accurate information
- Clear expectations and timelines
- Transparent decision-making
- Professional and respectful communication

My commitment is to ensure communication around evaluations, team selection, and competitive programming is proactive, structured, and reliable.

Accountability must be present at every level to ensure decisions consistently reflect the best interests of players and the association.

6. Building a Positive Competitive Culture

Competitive hockey should be demanding, respectful, and rewarding.

SMHA must continue fostering an environment where:

- Players feel supported and challenged
- Coaches feel valued and empowered
- Families feel informed and confident
- Officials are treated with respect
- Teams compete with pride and professionalism

Culture is not accidental—it is built through consistent expectations, leadership, and accountability across every level.

Closing Statement

SMHA has made significant progress in developing its competitive program, with strong opportunity to continue building on that foundation.

As Vice President of Competitive, my focus would be to:

- Strengthen transparency and fairness in all processes

- Enhance player development pathways
- Better support coaches and team staff
- Build sustainable systems for future leadership teams
- Foster a competitive culture grounded in respect, accountability, and growth
- Ensure SMHA continues to set a strong standard for competitive hockey across the province

Most importantly, my goal is to ensure every player in SMHA has the opportunity to develop, compete, and enjoy the game in a structured and meaningful environment.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued commitment to our hockey community.

Matthew Brown