

CONGRATULATIONS to our Haines Junction Huskies for placing 4<sup>th</sup> out of 6 teams at the Yukon Novice Championships last weekend in Teslin!

**THANK YOU** to everyone who volunteered at the recent concessions! At the Oldtimers Tournament we grossed about \$1,860 (plus \$200 on the loonie stick - great idea, Cindi!) and at the Atom Championships we grossed about \$2,650. Awesome!

Fundraising, such as these concessions, provides a valuable service and helps keep our registration fees low. For example, Whitehorse Minor Hockey charges \$550 registration fees for Atom to Midget players! By signing up for these fundraisers, you do your part to make minor hockey affordable and accessible in Haines Junction.

**Go Huskies, Go!**  
**YUKON PEEWEE CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
March 4-6  
Watson Lake  
Info: Mark 634-2943

**THANK YOU** to Val Drummond, the Dakwakada Dancers and everyone else who made the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual St. Elias Dalls Female Jamboree such a success!

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9 is the last day of regular practices for the season.

- Mites/Tykes finish on Tuesday, March 8 with a Parents vs Kids game at 6 pm.
- Atoms finish on Tuesday, March 8 with a

Parents vs Kids game at 6:30 pm.

- Peewees/Bantams/Midgets will finish on Tuesday, March 8 with a Females vs the Kids game at 7:45 pm.
- Novices will finish on Wednesday, March 9 with a Parents vs the Kids game at 6:30 pm.

**THANK YOU** to Michael Allaway, Andy Hall, Craig Nichols, Maggie Mann, School Council, the Department of Education and everyone else for facilitating the use of the school van for the Hockey Day in Canada events in Whitehorse!

CONGRATULATIONS to our Atom Huskies for playing hard and placing 7<sup>th</sup> out of 8 teams at the Yukon Atom Championships on February 18-20.

**THANK YOU** to Sifton Air for your very generous donation of two flight-seeing trips to the coaches at the Yukon Atom Championships!

**WAY TO GO, TEAM!** Our own Dana Van Vliet scored the Yukon's only goal in the round robin portion of the Canada Winter Games! Dana scored it in their game against Nova Scotia.

**KATHLEEN LAKE FAMILY FEST DAY & POND HOCKEY GAMES**  
Saturday, March 19  
Hockey starts 12 noon  
Info: Mark 634-2943



## BC HOCKEY SCHOLARSHIPS

BC Hockey scholarships are awarded annually to deserving recipients who are in their graduating year of high school and are presently registered members in BC and the Yukon. The eligibility criteria and application procedures are set out on the application forms. The deadline for submitting an application is April 30, 2011. More info is at [www.bchockey.net](http://www.bchockey.net)

**KILRICH/NORTHERM NATIVE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT**  
March 25-27  
Whitehorse

If you are interested in playing in the Youth or Jamboree divisions, please contact Trish George at 634-4207.

**Whitehorse Minor Hockey has invited Haines Junction Minor Hockey to enter teams in their end of season tournament**  
**April 1-3**

If you are interested in playing, please contact Mark at 634-2943



**AWARDS BANQUET**  
We are looking for 3 volunteers to sit on this year's Awards Banquet Committee. If you want to have a say on this last special event of the year, please let Mark know.



**Haines Junction Players on the Yukon's 2011 Canada Winter Games Female Hockey Team - L-R: Brittney Brown, Savannah Van Vliet, Maya Oakley, Dana Van Vliet, Sierra Oakley**

**RAMPANT CONCUSSIONS RAISING BIG QUESTIONS ON ICE - Calgary Herald, Jan. 2, 2011**

**New data show that concussions among minor hockey players are occurring at alarming rates -- as high as one in 10 in a new study --sparking debate at all levels of the sport and a new wave of initiatives to increase safety. But is enough being done to keep children safe?**

Alarming new results from a preliminary study finding that one in 10 minor hockey players suffered concussions in a single season has Calgary Bisons bantam AAA coach Tyler Drader thinking back to his playing career, which ended a decade ago after playing Junior A with the Calgary Royals.

Drader estimates he suffered 13 concussions playing hockey.

"I remember driving home with my dad and he'd have to pull over because I had to throw up," recalled Drader. "He'd say, 'What's wrong?' And I was like, 'I don't know. I can't remember the game.' But I'd be in the next game three days later. Nobody really knew what was going on until later.

"I've had doctors tell me that I shouldn't be playing, but, obviously, with my love of the game, I didn't listen to them. I don't know if that's a good thing, and it's not a message I'd want to send to the kids."

It's a message that many people in minor hockey are trying to change, especially in light of an increasing body of evidence that says concussions may be much more prevalent and serious in minor hockey than most people suspect.

The most recent data are shocking to many involved in the sport. A pilot study conducted by University of Alberta assistant professor Martin Mrazik during the 2009-10 season in two Edmonton-area minor hockey associations found that about one in 10 players suffered a concussion that required missing game or practice time.

It's the latest wake-up call to a sport that once prided itself on its play-through-the-injury attitude. Concussions can be a mercurial injury, notoriously difficult to diagnose, and doctors are only starting to understand the long-term cumulative effects. But as data mount

about its serious effects, many people in the sport are working to find ways of making hockey safer.

Concussions are classified as brain trauma, and occur when the brain is rattled inside the skull. Until recently, there has been little data about concussions in sport.

Mrazik is hoping to change that. His study has been formally expanded into a two-year project, beginning this season, that will encompass the entire Edmonton Minor Hockey Association and the Red Deer Minor Hockey Association.

The goal is to not only track the number of concussions, but to follow up with the players to determine protocols for their safe return to the ice, and figure out if certain players are more susceptible to concussions.

"At the elite level, it's great, the guys are pretty well taken care of," says Mrazik, who's authored various papers on sports concussions in the past, and has done consulting work with the Edmonton Oilers as part of the NHL's concussion program. "But it's the younger kids, where there's much more of a developmental component. They're at a very different stage (of development) and the resources are much less for kids playing minor hockey. They don't have a medical person on their staff, they don't have trainers and doctors working with them on a regular basis. So if we can take what we know on the elite levels and bring it down to minor hockey levels, then it will be a good thing overall."

That there is a concussion problem in hockey won't come as a surprise to anyone, of course, but only in recent years has the depth of the problem become known.

A Canadian study released in June, for instance, showed that during a

52-game span of junior-level games involving two teams, 17 out of 67 players suffered concussions, and five of those suffered at least two.

Even more alarming, perhaps, was the display of the "suck-it-up" attitude, in which players refused to acknowledge the effects, and potentially more serious after-effects, of the concussion.

"This study showed a disturbing lack of compliance by the athletes to undergo requested neuropsychological evaluations and multiple physician visits, as well as a lack of understanding about the seriousness of concussion," said co-author Charles Tator in the original news release publicizing the study.

Mrazik thinks that attitude is beginning to change, thanks largely to raised awareness at the professional level.

"I think one of the best things that has happened is that players at the NHL level, who are the role models, are being very open about it," he says. "They're saying, 'Look, I struggled with this, I suffered this.' They've put together some very good educational videos, and I find that has had a positive impact. But I still think we have to do more."

Part of Mrazik's goal is to examine why certain young hockey players are more prone to concussions and are affected more profoundly.

One obvious reason is past experience with the injury -- Mrazik noted those with past concussions are three times as likely to suffer another.

As well, statistically speaking, "left-handers have a slightly higher incidence, kids with history of learning disability, reading disorder or attention difficulties, family or personal history of migraines, kids with certain mood disorders -- concussion magnifies those problems," he says.

"To say it's a minor injury, and after seven days you'll be fine, no matter what, that's a misnomer. For most kids it is, but for a small group of kids, they suffer these complex concussions with post-concussion syndrome, and long-term, research is showing us they tend to have cognitive or psychological problems."

Adding to the challenge is the nebulous nature of the injury; there's a constant debate over what constitutes a concussion. Many go undiagnosed.

"And those are more concerning because the effects of concussion are cumulative; it's not something you recover from and go along your merry way as if you just hit a reset button," says Hockey Calgary president Perry Cavanagh. "And if they're not being treated appropriately, it can result in some long-term challenges for those individuals. I'm an example of that myself; I got banged around pretty heavily in football as a teenager, and I suffer severely these days from migraines. It's not a fun situation. And that's why I have a little bit more of a passion for this than some of the old-school folks out there who believe that there should be bodychecking at the tyke level."

Better diagnosis is key, say Cavanagh, especially among teams with younger players that lack educated trainers.

"There are really only 40 teams in the (Calgary) system that have elite, high-level trainers, a higher level than standard first aid," he says. "The trainers for the other 790 or so hockey clubs are basically first-aiders, first-responders with a little bit of the focus on some of the symptoms (of concussion) through the Hockey Canada safety program."

That, in turn, has made it tougher to gain solid numbers on the impact of the injury in youth hockey.

"Certainly there's an increase in organizations that are actually collecting concussion data, but because of the mechanism of the injury, and, more importantly, because it's often a hidden injury, the collection of those

stats is often very, very challenging," says Todd Jackson, Hockey Canada's senior manager of insurance and membership services.

At the end of the day, officials at every level of hockey acknowledge that concussions are a problem, and are eager to tackle the issue.

Cavanagh says Hockey Calgary is aiming to introduce a concussion-awareness program as early as next season, displaying posters and banners in city rinks with information on concussions as part of a long-term education strategy.

"We know our game is a physical game," adds Ray Boudreau, Hockey Alberta's vice-chair of game and conduct management. "So it's not about saying that players should play injured or anything like that. We're trying to put the focus on two things. One, when there's an injury, how do we treat it? And what are the return-to-play protocols to make sure the athlete's health is protected? We're trying to be proactive in those areas."

That attitude is already making its way onto the ice. Bisons bantam AAA coach Drader says he still deals with headaches as a lingering effect from his playing days, so he takes a cautious approach with his players.

"Our trainers are very strict on the timeline they set (before returning to the ice)," says Drader. "They have to be headache-free for at least 48 hours, and then a non-contact practice, and after that a contact practice."

"We had a perfect example (in a recent game). Our star player (and leading scorer in the Alberta Major Bantam Hockey League), Tanner MacMaster, got rammed from behind with about five minutes left in the game. His bottom two teeth went through his lip, and we shut him down for the rest of the night."

"Luckily there was no concussion, but it easily could have happened."

Significant numbers:

1 in 10

Number of minor hockey players who suffered a concussion in a preliminary Edmonton study in one season

17 of 67

Number of junior players who suffered concussions over 52 games in a Quebec study

5 of 67

Number of junior players who suffered more than one concussion over 52 games in a Quebec study

2.5

Number of players aged 11 and 12 who are more likely to suffer injuries than players in non-contact leagues, according to a joint U of C study

3.5

Number of players aged 11 and 12 who are more likely to suffer concussions than players in non-contact leagues, according to a joint U of C study