

St. James Speed Skating 2008/09 Year End Report

Apr. 20/08



This was a quieter year for our club, only one change on our club executive – George Dyker took over as Vice-President as Sonia Moore embarked on full time studies. Continuing were Gayle Rafter as Secretary, and Peter Birse as Treasurer. We acknowledge the dedication of Chris Deckert (Social), Chris Schaap (Equipment), Lana Hintz (Fundraising), and Lisa Hinton (Bingo). With the exception of Competitions (although chaired by Peter Birse), SJSSC filled all MSSA committee positions – we thank Trevis, Brett, Jason, and Lindy for their efforts. New this year – we had 2 parent contacts (one for each of ice session) - responsible for meet and event registrations, plus the old “other duties as assigned” – primarily confirming that all important information was received by club members (e-mail is great, but...). Our executive will be even stronger with Angela Johnson, who will bring years of experience to the new position of VP of Public Relations and Special Events. The club will benefit from the combined experience, as all members return next year.

With many new families, we again benefitted from a mini meet in October, introducing skaters to racing, and the parents to volunteer positions in Officiating. Three of our senior officials were invited to officiate at the Essent ISU World Championships (referees Rick Rempel, Trevis Boyd, and a humble finish line judge). All three club members will be watching for an invitation to participate in the Olympics, while Peter Birse is waiting to hear about an opportunity in administration.

Eleven skaters participated in a Learn to Speed Skate program held at the Allard the last 3 Sundays before Thanksgiving. Jointly coordinated by MSSA, and SJSSC, 4 skaters signed with the club. MSSA’s assistance is gratefully acknowledged, as our membership grew from 34 skaters (end of 07/08), to 38 skaters this season. This year 10 of the club’s skaters participated in the provincial program - 4 of these skaters also trained with the RTC. On the world stage, Shannon Rempel had a blistering start to the most recent World Cup season, while, despite injuries, Matt McLean was again selected to next season’s National Development Team.

Given the large number of “new” skaters joining the club over the past 2 years, it was decided to retain one hour of indoor ice each practice day over the long track season. It proved to be an excellent initiative, as our younger skaters had an opportunity to sharpen their skills under the watchful eye of coach Matt Mymryk. Given the severe weather, and ongoing construction at CKRC, their parents were also much happier at the Allard. Despite training indoors, many of these youngsters still participated in, and excelled at MSSA’s long track meets. Those hardy enough to train at the Susan Auch oval benefitted directly from the tutelage of head coach, Danielle Dubois. Sadly, after 4 years, we are losing our head coach, Danielle Dubois, as she is moving to Kingston to study Law at Queen’s University. The club is in the process of recruiting a new head coach. The future looks wonderful, however, as Grace Boyd attended SSC’s Youth Leadership Symposium in February, and has been nominated by the club’s executive to attend SSC’s Coaching Symposium in June – both events held at the new Olympic Oval in Richmond.

Some ups and downs financially: a surprise cut in Bingo Allocation, the additional 12 hours of ice for indoor ice during Long Track, we ended the year with only a small debt to the executive. This was primarily due to the diligence of my executive, and all of our club members, who heartily supported our fundraising initiatives - including a special Bud, Spud & Steak hosted by the MSSA (over 70 tickets sold, and baskets filled with prizes).

For the last two years, the club combined pre-season registration for returning members with a fun gathering. Last year’s event was a BBQ at Arnason’s horse farm. This year, Gayle Rafter hosted a BBQ/Pool Party with Registration. Red River Speed even attended for those members needing last minute equipment updates (if only those kids would stop growing). At our year end wind-up, we held an AGM to review finances with our associate members, and have prepared them for changes to our fee structure which are intended to enhance our club’s sustainability. With a strong returning team of members, the increased interest with the Olympics, SJSSC looks forward to another season of excellence in 09/10.

Jim Prendergast, President

Winnipeg Speed Skating Club Report

The Winnipeg Speed Skating Club had a trying past year. Our membership was down for the 2008-2009 season after an increase in membership for the 2007-2008 season.

With a downturn in membership, of course that means less volunteer parents. There was a lot of work to do for the board and the few other parents who aren't on the board. It also meant a downturn in revenues which caused a financial loss for the 2008-2009 season. The downturn in membership is of concern.

But not all is doom & gloom, there is a initiative to increase the WSSC profile and hopefully increase in membership. In August the WSSC will run the Susan Auch Speedskating School (will only run if there are enough participants- 15 to 20) in the Transcona area. Susan's former home turf. As a tie in to the Susan Auch Speed Skating School, the WSSC will participate in the Transcona Hi Neighbour festival parade as well as manning a information booth in June as well.

Hopefully there will an increase in new numbers with the extra media exposure due to the Vancouver 2010 Olympics.

Our coaching remains passionate, enthusiastic and expert. It is one of the strong points of the club.

On a personal note, - I will be stepping down as president of the WSSC. Most of the people at the WSSC are great and I wish them nothing but success in the future. There are many challenges ahead - the WSSC has had a great past and I believe with the people left in charge of the WSSC it still has a great future,

Respectfully Yours,
Michael Meissner
WSSC