

14 August, 2024

Kia ora hockey whānau,

What fantastic weekend of hockey just held! From our Epic Warrior Tournament held on the weekend to our interconference trials and team selections for our 10s, 12, 14s and Junior Womens players its been a busy time all round!

The Epic Warrior tournament was a fantastic display of talent from our 16u/18u players. Huge thanks to the coaches of each of the draft teams, Paul Mikkelsen, Shaun King, Clyde Jackson, Carl Cooper and Ant Nathan. Huge thanks also to our pool of referees – Brendon, Sam, Shannon, Walter, Glenn, Duane, Jason, Wesley, Silas and Ethan!

Again our thanks to both Epic Hockey and Warrior Hockey for the sponsorship of the event and to our coaches Ant Nathan, Clyde Jackson, Shawn Craig and Paul Mikkelsen and to Todd Velvin for the informative as ever commentary! Also to Richard Huffam for his help with livestreaming! The 2025 League promises to be a great event with the 3 rounds scheduled – look out for the calendar and more information of dates to come!

There were a couple of prizes on offer, congratulations to Eli Guptill for winning the signed Warrior Draisaitl jersey and to Nico Albornett who received the Epic prize of a new stick!



For more pictures please see our IHNZ Facebook site!

The Epic Warrior trophy was renamed in honour of Diane Thomsen to the Diane Thomsen Memorial Trophy.

Diane was the NZIHA President from 1999 to 2008, standing down after serving four terms leading the sport. Diane was also honoured with Life Membership in 2008.

Throughout her time leading the sport she showed her deep commitment, with a vision that included growth and development both locally and through participation at the highest level overseas.

She was well respected and proved to be a very positive communicator with an excellent working relationship with her executive and when liaising with national and international sporting federations.

Diane was a critical thinker and shared her vision and mentorship with those responsible for the various significant operational areas viewed as crucial to the development of the sport across New Zealand.



- **Nationals Blocks:**

Invoices have been issued to clubs for their entries and on the payment of these club entries are confirmed. We have asked these are completed by Friday August 16 so we can issue the draw. With 65 teams currently entered times are tight so we have asked for these confirmations prior to issuing the draw. This allows people to make any arrangements needed without having to reissue a draw and players having to rearrange their plans.

Don't forget our fantastic new merchandise range of IHNZ developed on rink and off rink clothing - tees, hoodies, shorts, playing jerseys and pants going live! Watch out for the link on **Monday 19th** August with the Nationals draw!

All items are available for purchase via Esports – pictures and sizing charts will be available and if you order by 31 August, items will be guaranteed to be available for delivery at Nationals.

- **Female League Weekends:**

The schedule for Round two in Kilbirnie 31 August - 1 September has been published – please check on the IHNZ Facebook site, website or with your club if unsure of the draw. It promises to be a great weekend for our Junior and Intermediate Women grades!

- **IHNZ NPL Round 3:**

New Plymouth Ravens will host Round 3 which promises to showcase some fantastic hockey as we have all 6 teams vying for finals honours where only the top 4 will make finals weekend on September 14-15 in Hamilton.

This event will be run in conjunction with the InterConference event so our younger players will get to watch our premier players in action! Being 3 weeks prior to Nationals makes it an exciting lead up to Premier honours!

- **Junior Interconference:**

Interconference team announcements are now out on their respective Facebook pages! These players are proudly going to be wearing our new interconference jerseys during the finals of the NPL

We invite you to come support and watch our up and coming players battle it out for Interconference supremacy and being the first grades to wear our new Interconference jerseys!

- **2025 and 2026 Planning:**

Tender documents for both the IHNZ National Championships and the NZSSC have been submitted with the tournaments assigned as follows:

- 2025 IHNZ NZSSC - Hamilton Devils Inline Hockey Club
- 2025 IHNZ National Championships – New Plymouth Ravens Inline Hockey Club

- 2026 IHNZ NZSSC - New Plymouth Ravens Inline Hockey Club
- 2026 IHNZ National Championships - Hamilton Devils Inline Hockey Club

By announcing this in advance we hope this allows for all clubs to make arrangements to enable their players to participate.

- **Club Survey and Feedback:**

All clubs were provided with a survey to complete in which a number of questions were asked - challenges faced, financial matters, membership, strategic planning, retention and expectations going forward.

Attached is summary of the responses highlighting the need for improved financial stability, strategic planning, community engagement, and governance to address the challenges faced by IHNZ clubs with the Board already working towards solutions and results to a number of these issues.

For the full summary of over 17 pages please see your club for a copy.

Summary of Survey Responses for IHNZ Clubs

1. Grants and Financial Stability:

- **Importance:** Grants are crucial for club operations, covering maintenance, venue rentals, and rink fees, which support financial stability and event hosting.
- **Challenges:** Securing grants is difficult due to high financial requirements and lack of expertise in application processes. Some clubs consider hiring professionals for grant applications.
- **Benefits:** Grants help reduce costs for members, support events, and maintain financial stability.
- **Current State:** Many clubs struggle to secure grants but recognize their potential for growth and sustainability.

2. Membership Numbers:

- **Challenges:** Uncertainty in scheduling, financial pressures, and competition from other sports affect membership numbers. Poor management and conflicting commitments also contribute to declines.
- **Positive Influences:** Quality coaching and increased rink time help maintain or increase membership. Clubs should target specific age groups and engage in community outreach.
- **Growth Initiatives:** Clubs should focus on specific demographics, improve facilities, and enhance marketing efforts through social media and community engagement.
- **Suggestions:** Clubs propose restructuring conferences, improving event scheduling, and increasing international competition opportunities.
- **Promotion:** Reviving the vibrant hockey atmosphere and encouraging club support for all grades are seen as important.

3. Financial and Strategic Planning:

- **Current Practices:** Most clubs adhere to budgeting practices and reported positive financial performance in 2023. However, many lack strategic plans, which could improve financial stability and effectiveness.
- **Regional Support:** The Southern Region faces unique challenges, and clubs call for greater support and engagement from the board.

4. Community Engagement:

- **Collaboration:** Clubs engage in collaborations with local groups, sports organizations, and schools to promote inline hockey.
- **Challenges:** Some clubs struggle to balance community engagement with the demands of keeping the club operational.

5. Marketing and Advertising:

- **Strategies:** Clubs utilize social media, websites, and traditional advertising methods like flyers and newspapers to attract new members.
- **Events:** Open days, public skate sessions, and promotional offers are used to engage potential members.

6. Member Retention:

- **Strategies:** Clubs focus on keeping fees low, fostering a positive club culture, and engaging members through social activities and communication.
- **Challenges:** Some clubs struggle with retention due to financial constraints and lack of resources.
- **Financial Management:** Affordability is crucial to prevent member disengagement.

7. Future Challenges:

- **Financial Pressures:** Clubs anticipate ongoing challenges with maintenance costs, travel expenses, and facility issues.
- **Membership Retention:** Retaining members, particularly juniors, and competing with other sports remain key concerns.
- **Facility and Development Issues:** Securing permanent rinks and improving facilities are crucial for long-term sustainability.
- **Collaboration:** Clubs need to work together more effectively to overcome competition and logistical hurdles.

8. Expectations from the New Board:

- **Governance and Leadership:** Clubs expect the new board to strengthen governance structures, improve financial management, and enhance communication with clubs.
- **Strategic Planning:** Developing a strategic plan with clear goals and supporting youth development are key expectations.

For any questions you may have, please send via the usual channel to gm@inlinehockeynz.org.nz.

Enjoy your week and we look forward to bringing you our further updates as soon as able.

Regards

IHNZ Board