

*10th Anniversary*



*1986-1996*



**LOOKING BACK**



# THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF LONDON

DIANNE HASKETT  
Mayor



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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



## London Devilettes Girls' Hockey Association

On behalf of City Council and the Citizens of London, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the players, coaches and volunteers of the London Devilettes Girls' Minor Hockey Association on this their tenth year of operation.

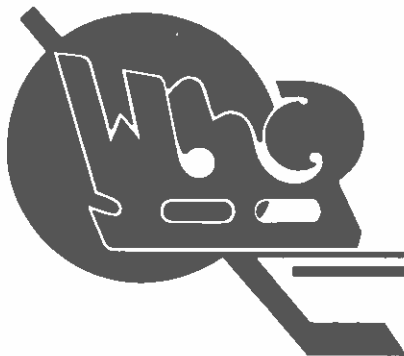
The popularity of women's hockey is demonstrated by the ever increasing number of girls getting involved in this sport. Over the years, hockey fans from London and the surrounding area have enjoyed the high calibre of hockey demonstrated by these dedicated young women.

Once again, my congratulations to your organization and I trust that you enjoy many more successful years.

Yours respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dianne Haskett', written over a horizontal line.

Dianne Haskett  
Mayor



## **Ontario Women's Hockey Association**

#30-1100 Central Parkway West, Mississauga, Ontario L5C 4E5

Phone (905) 275-8866

Fax. (905) 275-2001

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### **CONGRATULATIONS DEVILETTES!**

The Ontario Women's Hockey Association congratulates the London Devilettes Girls Hockey Association on your 10th anniversary season.

Everyone within the organization today, and those who laid the ground work should feel very proud of their accomplishments. The Devilettes is now one of the largest local female hockey associations in the world.

The quality of hockey played in London is first class. Competitive teams representing the association have won many league, tournament and provincial championship titles. House league programs are well run and offer tremendous opportunity for fun, friendship and skill development. The association is very pro-active in coordinating clinics to assist in training of volunteers and officials.

Volunteers working within the various areas of Devilettes' programmes have proven to be dedicated to the well being of the participants. Connie Rice and the other presidents and delegates have provided valuable leadership within the Ontario Women's Hockey Association.

It is due to the contributions of the London volunteers and other individuals throughout the province that the OWHA has been able to provide world-wide leadership in female hockey. Collective efforts have advanced our game at grass roots level and led directly to Ontario Winter Games, Canada Winter Games, National Championships, World Championships and acceptance into the 1998 Winter Olympics.

London joined in the successful lobby to bring the 1997 Women's World Hockey Championship to Ontario. The strength of our six satellite locations was instrumental in winning the bid over New Brunswick and British Columbia. London's recent presentation on their progress in planning a key game in Pool B was excellent. The administrative abilities of this organization are very impressive.

Congratulations to the London Devilettes. Your work has made a very positive impact on the lives of many female hockey enthusiasts. Sincere thanks to everyone and best wishes for continued success in the future!

Yours very truly,

Fran Rider,  
Executive Director,  
Ontario Women's Hockey Association

**PROUD PAST.....BRIGHT FUTURE!**



**NATALIE CRAIG**

It was indeed an honour to be able to produce the first edition of the history of The London Devilettes Girls' Hockey Association. It is my hope that all of you will enjoy and appreciate this edition, not in the initial reading only, but many times in the future when the turning of its pages will assist in bringing back memories that may have been dimmed but not forgotten. Above all, this anniversary book is a tribute to a decade of female hockey players.

Thanks to anyone who made this book a reality. For all of you who submitted articles and pictures, you have helped capture ten years of memories. Special thanks to Darla Goulden for designing the cover, Infinite Graphics for the design and layout and graphics and especially Doug Purssglove of Holiday Print & Litho for donating the printing of the cover. His guidance and suggestions helped me immensely.

It is a great pleasure for me to extend best wishes for an enjoyable and successful season and a very Happy 10th Anniversary to all the members, past and present of The London Devilettes Girls' Hockey Association.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Natalie Craig".

Natalie Craig  
Editor



## HOW THE ASSOCIATION WAS FORMED

*written by Natalie Craig*



The London Devilettes Girls' Hockey Association was formed in the fall of 1986. We owe a great deal to the tremendous dedication of the person who was the driving force behind its formation -- Jim Martin.

Jim Martin played hockey for years out of Wiarton and Owen Sound. He is and always has been a Toronto Maple Leafs fan. Jim and his wife Charlene have three daughters and one son: Joie, Vanessa, Chantele and Trent. During the early 1980's all the Martin girls played hockey in London on boys' teams. Jim always believed girls should have their own hockey association as he could see more and more girls playing on boys' teams. So, one fall evening in 1986, Jim called a number of people together and the association was formed. Jim wanted a uniform for the girls that looked good and would be different. He liked the New Jersey Devils colours -- red, green and white and decided to choose it. The feminine version of devils became devilettes. He designed the logo and thus the association officially became known as The London Devilettes Girls' Hockey Association. Jim's goal was for London to have the largest female hockey association in the world!

For the next seven years, Jim, his wife Charlene and the entire family lived, breathed and ate hockey. They never missed an opportunity to promote it. During those seven years Jim served a number of positions on the board. He was the public relations coordinator, sponsor convenor and president. Charlene was the treasurer, bingo convenor and did the fundraising. Jim was also the O.W.H.A. regional director from 1988 to 1993. During the first season the Devilettes had a single team of approximately 20 players. At the end of our first decade we increased from a single team to approximately 560 girls. Currently we have both house-league and competitive teams. In 1994, Senior AA was added to the association. The Devilettes hosted their first tournament in February 1991 and there were 12 teams. In 1996 the tournament had 58 teams registered.

During Christmas 1995 the Herlev Women's Icehockey team from Denmark visited Ontario and came to play a few games against the Devilette Midget/Senior teams. The players were billited by Devilette players and their families. Everyone enjoyed this experience and many of the girls still are in contact with each other. In February 1996, the Netherlands National team came to play a game against our Senior AA team. Once again, it turned out to be a very enjoyable experience for everyone.

The Martin girls -- Joie, who started playing hockey at age 12 is now a doctor in family medicine and still plays hockey at the senior B level; Vanessa started hockey at age 10, studied kinesiology for three years at Windsor University and also still plays hockey at the Senior level; Chantele who started at age 5 played until she was 17 but no longer plays. She is currently studying at Fanshawe College.

Jim and Charlene formed the association so every female, regardless of age or skill could have a place to play hockey, and always emphasized fun, friendship and fair play. The success of The London Devilettes Girls' Hockey Association is a fine example of the amazing accomplishments possible when everyone works towards a common goal.



### **CONNIE RICE**

Since joining the Devilettes in 1988, I have had many pleasant experiences. I have met hundreds of new people and worked with many dedicated volunteers who have helped maintain the Devilettes standards of excellence and make the Devilettes what it is today.

Since becoming president my whole life has revolved around hockey. My daughter, Chrissy, has played with the Devilettes since Novice and has been fortunate to have been on three Provincial winning teams. My husband, Bob, has been involved as registrar and now ice convenor and my son, Gord, has helped out at home and assisted in our annual tournament which takes place in February of each year.

I have watched the Devilettes grow and develop from one team at its inception to thirty-eight teams today - 24 in house league, 12 minor competitive teams and two senior competitive teams. We have had our share of growing pains but it has all been worth it in the end result. The story evolves from our competitive players playing in house league to the separation of both our "A" and "B" teams out on their own. We now have a true house league, a place where females can play and develop, and still be competitive but not travel. Our competitive teams have done very well over the years bringing home 12 gold medals from the Provincials since the start of the Devilettes. Our house league playoff games this year were very exciting and the stands were full of excited spectators.

It is great to see the development of our girls - we have come a long way - from a sport which at one time was available only to males. It just goes to show "Girls play hockey too!"

This coming season should be exciting for everyone. The most important thing of all is this is our 10th Anniversary, "Happy Anniversary". The first thing to happen will be the 1997 Midget Team, which will be going to P.E.I. in February, tryout camp which will be held in London on September 14, 1996 at Nichols Arena. Some 2,000 applications have been sent to girls born between 79/82 and will be narrowed down to approximately sixty by the tryout camp. Next is our tournament, which is a huge success every year, and will take place on February 14, 15 and 16, 1997. Finally, we are one of the satellite sites of the Women's World Hockey Championship which will take place in Kitchener from March 31 - to April 6, 1997 featuring the best teams from all over the world. There is always something happening in female hockey as we are still growing!!

We have on our Board of Directors today, thirty dedicated volunteers who work all year round to make our program better every year. I would like to thank all of those volunteers who have returned to us year after year and the new volunteers for making a difference - lots of help and ideas.

I hope everyone has a good season and many more to come!

*Connie Rice*  
*President*

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### **SPORTS ADMINISTRATORS AWARD**

*Received March 30, 1996. Nominated for the National Sports Administrators Award sponsored by Investors Group. Chosen by F.A.I.R. (Females Active in Recreation) and the City of London Recreation Services to represent London in the national competition. - The award recognizes the contributions to community sports programs by a dedicated female volunteer.*

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*J. R. DARLENE WALKER*

When I think about the history of the London Devilettes Girls' Hockey Association, the first organizational meeting comes to mind. I feel the excitement of that evening and remember how it was difficult to sleep that night. The girls of London would finally have their own organization and compete among themselves and with many other communities across Ontario. I remember thinking how lucky these girls would be and how, at the age of 38, I was born too soon! I also remember thinking about all the work and preparation that lay ahead. I decided that night that 1985-86 would be my last winter coaching boys in the South London Minor Sports Association. I would join an eager group of hard-working organizers and devote my volunteer hours to help form this new Association.

My interest in hockey started as a young girl when my father's construction company in St. Catherines, Ontario employed off-season hockey players from the St. Catherines Tee Pees which was a "farm club" for the Chicago Black Hawks at that time. His employees included defenseman Elmer "Moose" Vasco and the famous Stan Mikita. I'm old enough to admit that, during the days of the "original six", I could rhyme off all the N.H.L. players and their sweater numbers.

I finally got my first chance to play hockey in my early twenties when the women at London City Hall formed a fundraising team known as the City Hall Stars. We would challenge other local corporations to fun hockey games, the proceeds of which were donated to charitable causes such as the Heart Fund. This was a lot of fun and despite the fact that we generally wore borrowed equipment with our figure skates, we remained undefeated for several seasons and raised a lot of money for charity.

My only child, Jason, started playing hockey with South London Minor Sports Association in 1976 and I turned into the typical hockey mom. My husband and I never missed a game or a practice and when Jason made the Competitive Team, we lived at the rinks. I was active in the Hockey Moms Club, but was never totally satisfied with that role. Finally, with the encouragement of four people -- my husband, my son, Skip Cummins and Larry Spettigue -- I decided I would coach Minor Hockey. I gave away my figure skates, bought a pair of hockey skates, and from 1981 to the spring of 1983, I prepared myself. I achieved Level V in the London Skating Club's Power Skating program taught by Larry Gazdig, and passed Level III of the National Coaches Certification Program taught by Dack Thomas.

I coached at the Atom Level in the House League of South London during the 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86 season and loved every minute of it. In fact, my team won the season championship and an important tournament in the 1984-85 season. During that tournament's award ceremonies, I was asked who the coach was of this great little team as it was assumed that a male was lurking somewhere in the background!

This is when my awareness of the girls' situation became more acute. I had one girl on my team, Melanie Alexander, but there were others who played in the boys' House Leagues throughout the City. The problem was that they were "stuck in House League" because there were no competitive teams for them until they were old enough to play on women's teams.

In the case of another South London player, Jennifer Dewar, this was a serious concern as Jennifer displayed a talent far superior to most of the boys she played with. Other girls were not willing or permitted by their parents to play on boys' teams and therefore did not play hockey at all. The girls were not playing on boys' teams because they wanted to, it was because there were no other choices.



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Even though I didn't have a daughter of my own, this did not dampen my desire to support and assist in the London Devilette's birth and growth. In fact, my son was a constant source of optimism and encouragement when the skeptics said it wouldn't work. I was proud to head the organization in the capacity of President from its inception in 1986 to the spring of 1988. In addition to the administration of the organization, including the obtaining of its Non-Profit Corporate Status, I also took every opportunity to help with the on-ice duties. The first time I stepped on the ice to help instruct Power Skating, I could hardly stop smiling long enough to talk to the girls seriously when they needed help. In fact, all the coaches, managers and helpers were in a constant state of exhilaration when the first teams hit the ice. We could all see a long-awaited dream finally being realized for the girls of London in a sport that definitely crosses gender lines.

In the winter of 1988-89 I remained in the background, visited the rinks from time to time, and generally entered my retirement from hockey in the capacity of Past President. The year 1989 saw my 42nd birthday and I felt it was time to move aside and make room for younger blood to take over.

In 1993 my son married, and he and his wife Suzan, have a beautiful daughter named Madeline who is now two years old. My husband, Hal, retired from the City of London in 1994 and we moved to our present country home approximately 40 minutes south of Pembroke near Round Lake, Ontario. We enjoy hunting and fishing, and visiting and corresponding with our families. In the fall of 1989, I began volunteering as a tutor in the Adult Literacy Program in London. I carry on this volunteer work here in Renfrew County's Program and have been asked to consider running for the Board Chairperson in the spring of 1997.

Hal (who played Junior Hockey in his younger days), Jason and I still love the game, but the most fun right now is watching Madeline. Jason takes her out to watch Minor Hockey games and she loves to play road hockey with him in the driveway. Maybe there will be a Walker playing for the Devilettes yet!

Yours very truly,



Darlene Walker

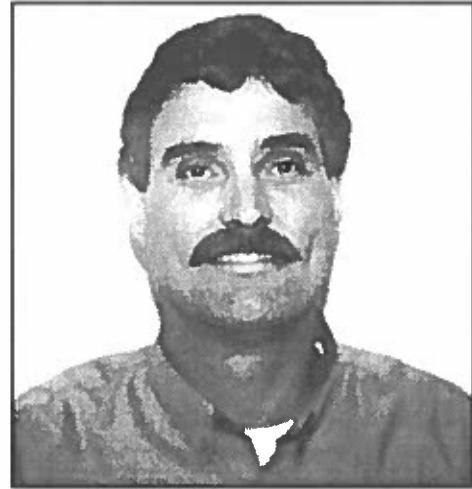
## PAST PRESIDENTS



**AL KOVACS** - Past President 1988-89

*"Because of the vision of some dedicated individuals, the Devilettes Hockey Association was formed. I am very proud of having been able to contribute to the growth process of the biggest female hockey organization in Canada.*

*Wish you all continued success."*



**LEN A. GRAAT** - Past President 1989-91

*"Minor hockey in London and area will never be the same with the explosion of Girls' Hockey."*



**JIM MARTIN** - Past President 1991-93

*"Our aims in forming the association was to create a place for all females regardless of age or ability to participate in an organized sport which I enjoyed for many years.*

*As the association grew in numbers, it was very exciting to see the happy faces of the young and older ladies enjoying what they had never had the opportunity to enjoy in the past.*

*Our philosophy through the years was, that if you developed tunnel vision and could no longer see the association as a whole, then you had probably outlived your usefulness and should step aside.*

*Our hope for the future is that all present and future board members never lose site of our aims and always remember that a good strong base at the beginner level will supply all that is needed for a strong competitive and senior level."*



## The London Devilettes' First Team 1986 / 87 Season

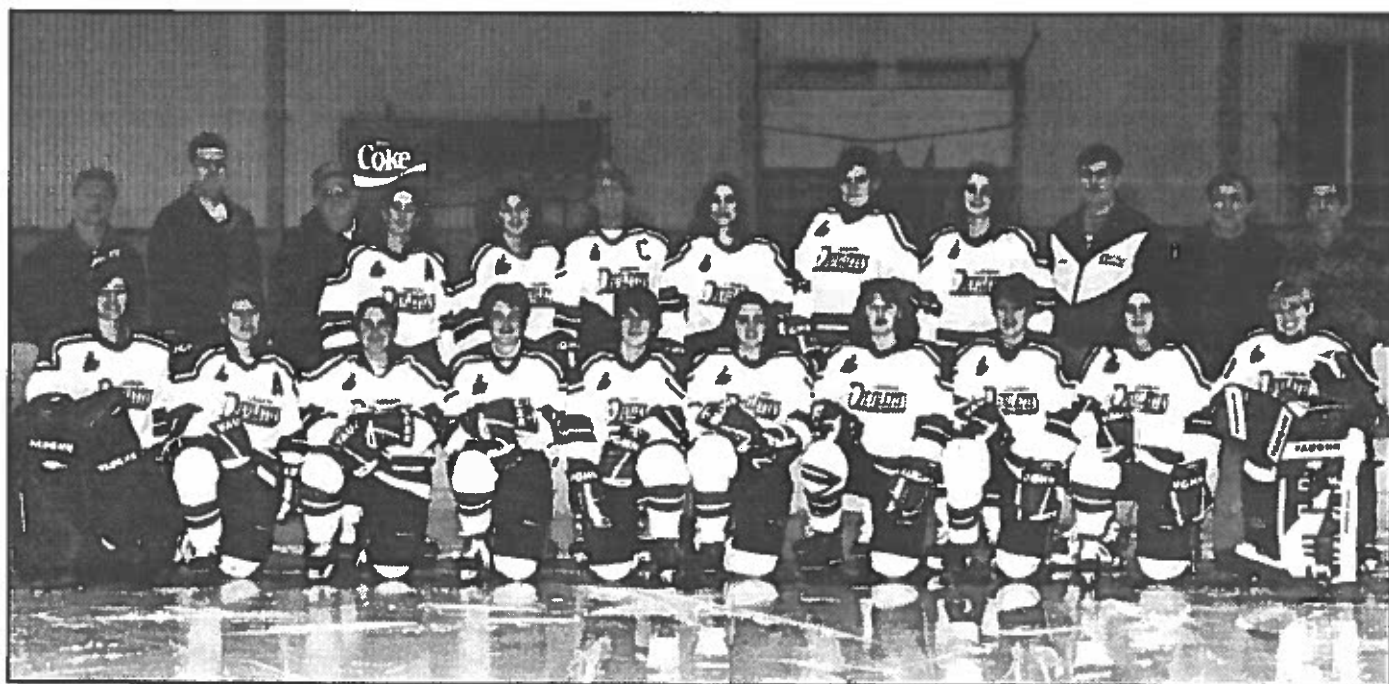


*The Event: Ridgetown Pee-Wee Tournament*

Back Row (L to R): Al Kovacs, Harold Bush, Jillaine Wilson, Lorene Cormier, Krista Gieger, Angela Wood, Jen Neumann, Jan Barrett, Tournament Chairman (name unknown).

Front Row (L to R): Ann-Marie Kovacs, Melanie Alexander, Jen Dewar, Renee McAllister, Jen Bush, Lana Parsons, Heidi Solway.

## The London Devilettes' First Senior AA Team 1994-95



Back Row (L to R): John Pearce, Bill McKnight, John Nicholson, Melissa DeBruyne, Tara McKay, Martha Hart, Samantha Scott, Cathy Depencier, Jen Neumann, Doug Barker, Roger Dewar, George Taylor.

Front Row (L to R): Jennifer Dewar, Eva Barker, Laura-Lea Filey, Linda Poort, Dayna Dann, Shelly Taylor, Kathy Rombouts, Shelley Beardshaw, Cheryl Nicholson, Casey Van de Peer.

## 1988 - Atom C - Provincial Champions



Back Row: (L to R): Graham Shouldice, Karrie O'Brien, Nicole Hoekstra, Jackie Low, Sarah Burns, Jim Martin.  
Middle Row (L to R): Jill Graat, Tara Vowles, Chantelle Martin, Jen Wildman, Sarah Masacar, Amy Lane, Charlaine Martin.  
Front (L to R): Lori-Anne Shouldice, Christine Tucker, Lisa Matias.

## 1988 - PeeWee B - Provincial Champions



Back Row: (L to R): Jim Dunsmore, Melanie Alexander, Krista Geiger, Jen Neumann, Angela Wood, Lynn MacDonald, Renee McAllister, Sarah Dunsmore, Ann-Marie Kovacs, Al Kovacs.  
Front Row (L to R): Tara Graat, Lana Parsons, Erin Dale, Jen Morris, Amy Pinnegar, Jill Graat, Pat Kovacs.

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## 1988 - Intermediate B - Provincial Champions



Back Row: (L to R): Roger Dewar, Doug Barker, Melanie Sauve, Penny Barker, Michelle Lees, Lorrie Wright, Eva Morris, Penny Stewart, Tammy Lamb, Debbie Lamb, Charlaine Martin, Jim Martin.

Front Row: (L to R): Heather McAllister, Joie Martin, Jennifer Dewar, Karen Davies, Vanessa Martin.

## 1989 - PeeWee A - Provincial Champions



Back Row: (L to R): John Parsons, Brian George, Liz Auger, Kim Ironside, Angela Wood, Jen Neumann, Karrie Thompson, Lisa Pryce, Al Kovacs, Pat Kovacs.

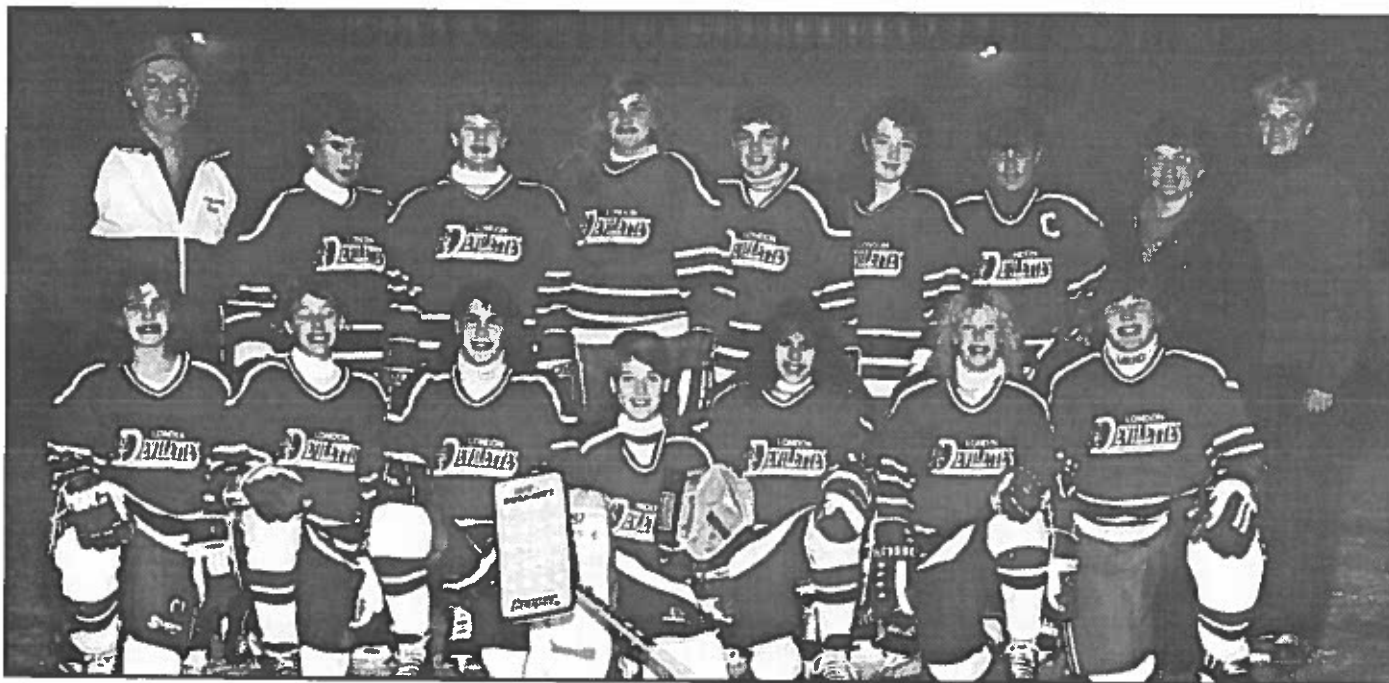
Front Row: (L to R): Lisa Skinner, Ann-Marie Kovacs, Tara Graat, Lana Parsons, Amy Pinnegar.

## 1989 - Senior C - Provincial Champions



Back Row: (L to R): Cathy Hawes, Eva Morris, Gord Wright, Penny Barker, Lorrie Wright, Melanie Sauve, Laura Pearce, Donna Reist, Michelle Lees, Kerrie LaPorte, Michelle Morrison, Mike Lees.  
Front Row: (L to R): Vanessa Martin, Shelly Vance, Nancy Wister, Pat Reid, Tina Groulx.  
Absent from photo: Jill Thompson, Lisa Anderson, Karen Davies.

## 1990 - PeeWee A - Provincial Champions



Back Row: (L to R): Bob Burns, Sarah Burns, Lindsey Howard, Nicole Hockstra, Jill Graat, Jackie Low, Lana Parsons, Jean Pincombe, Tracey Jessome.  
Front Row: (L to R): Chantelle Martin, Tara Vowles, Sherrie Scott, Christine Tucker, Lisa Matias, Nicole Thompson, Tiffany Pincombe.

## 1991 - Novice A - Provincial Champions



Top Center: Martha Dow.

Back Row: (L to R): Dayna Dann, Jodi MacFarlane, Angela Carter, Elisabeth Duggan, Catherine Black, Christina Rice, Danielle Finlay, Sylvie Lebrun.

Front Row: (L to R): Trisha Arnold, Kathryn Grasso, Amanda Masse, Erin O'Grady, Lynn Beynon.

## 1993 - Atom A - Provincial Champions



Back Row: (L to R): Dayna Dann, Martha Dow, Kylene Williams, Elisabeth Duggan, Catherine Black, Allison Petrie, Trisha Arnold, Kristin Whitney, Sylvie Lebrun.

Front Row: (L to R): Kim Fleet, Melissa Farrugia, Lisa Flood, Shannon Lucas, Amanda Masse, Christina Rice, Kathryn Grasso, Lynn Beynon.

## 1994 - Midget A - Provincial Champions



Back Row: (L to R): Bob Burns, Joanne Graat, Tiffany Pincombe, Rosalyn Day, Lindsey Howard, Kim Shillington, Doug Tucker.  
Middle Row: (L to R): Leona Baker, Sarah Burns, Tara Vowies, Sherri Scott, Susie Barnes, Jill Graat.  
Front: (Lying Down): Christine Tucker.

## 1995 - PeeWee A - Provincial Champions



Back Row: (L to R): Gaylyn Masse, Gwyn Beynon, Christina Rice, Kylene Williams, Catherine Black, Allison Petrie, Paul Flood, Harold Lang.  
Front Row: (L to R): Melissa Finley, Shannon Lucas, Trisha Arnold, Leanne Tunks, Amanda Masse, Lisa Flood, Kathryn Grasso, Lynn Beynon, Kim Fleet.  
Absent: Caitlin Reid.



## 1995 - Bantam A - Provincial Champions



Back Row: (L to R): Dani Isen, Liz Dunlop, Shelbi Fletcher, Leslie Stefanko, Sue Vanderhill, Kari Hilton, Natalie Schembri, Wayne Isen, Fred Schembri.

Front Row: (L to R): Celina Isen, Kylie Reade, Missy Oliver, Stacie Hoekstra, Katherine Dunlop, Lauren Gulka, Andrea Lavelle.

Absent from photo: Sasha Miszczyk (Goalie).

## 1995 - Midget A - Provincial Champions



Back Row: (L to R): Joanne Graat, Doug Tucker, Mel Swarts, Sarah Burns, Susie Barnes, Rosalynn Day, Kim Shillington, Bob Burns.

Middle Row: (L to R): Tara Vowles, Jen Wildman, Melissa Rennison, Jill Graat, Lindsey Howard.

Front Row (lying down): Christine Tucker (Goalie).

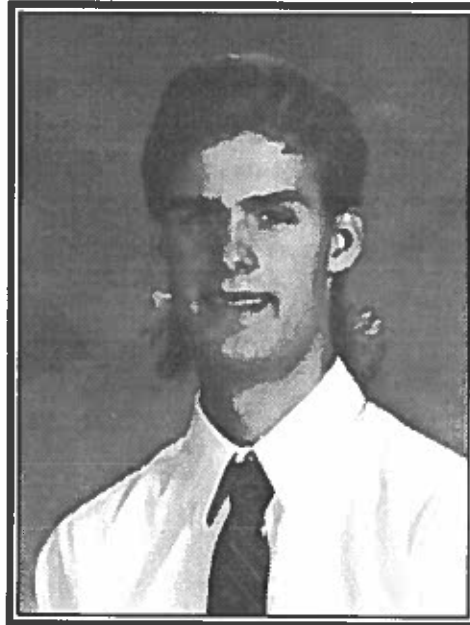
Absent from photo: Leona Baker, Barb Duggan.

## SCOTT GEDIES MEMORIAL AWARD FOR BEST TEAM SUPPORT

This award was established by the London Devilettes Executive in memory of the fine contributions of Scott Gedies to female hockey. It is awarded annually to a Bantam/Midget hockey player who best exemplifies qualities such as the principles of fair play, respect, cooperation, team play, and off-ice support for her team and the London Devilettes organization.

Scott Gedies (1973-1993), the second oldest child of the Gedies family, collapsed suddenly during his weekly Friday summer hockey game with his dad, brother, and friends at the Thompson arena. Despite the close proximity to the University Hospital, he could not be revived and he died of a rare sudden arrhythmia shortly thereafter without ever regaining consciousness.

Scott loved sports and cared deeply for welfare of others. Thus, when the Gedies family became heavily involved with London Devilettes organization during his last five years, Scott volunteered his services in a variety of ways such as, assisting his dad in the coaching of six Bantam and Midget house league and travel teams, refereeing winter and summer female hockey games, running the time clocks and game sheets for Bantam



and Midget games, scouting other teams for strengths and weaknesses during tournaments and league games and assisting in various capacities during the annual London Devilettes' tournaments.

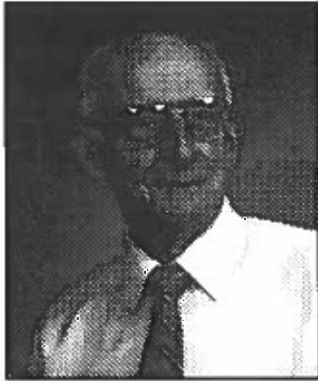
As a hockey player for nearly 16 years, Scott played at every position, including goal, at both the house league and the competitive levels. He was a dedicated and unselfish team player with a great deal of finesse placing team goals ahead of individual

achievements.

His most valued hockey accomplishments include a provincial championship as co-captain and a trip to Europe as a member of an area rep. team. Whether in victory or defeat, Scott always displayed good sportsmanship and great loyalty for his teams because of his love and passion for the game of hockey. The major criteria for this prestigious award, therefore, reflect closely what Scott himself exemplified best.

**Congratulations** on behalf of the **London Devilettes Executive** and the **Gedies family** are due to the following most **deserving** award winners to date:

- 1993/94 - **Teresa Mota**
- 1994/95 - **Natalie Schembri**
- 1995/96 - **Stephanie Simpson**

**NORTH STAR ICE CO.****ARTHUR DEWAR**

During the 1995-1996 hockey season, North Star Ice Company donated an award to the London Devilettes Girls' Hockey Association to be presented each year to an individual who is committed by working quietly behind the scenes. It will be presented to someone who stays in the background, not needing the cheers of a crowd or enthusiastic recognition to continue their tasks. This award has been named the ARTHUR DEWAR Volunteer Award with the initial recipient being Arthur Dewar.



The Canada Trust Good Sport Award was donated during the 1995-96 hockey season to a player from each houseleague team who best demonstrated the qualities of a good sport. To be a winner, the player must give her best at all times, play fair, display self-discipline, show good team spirit, display a willing and helpful attitude towards the teammates, coaches and officials, accept responsibility for herself and the team by being on time and ready to play and display a positive attitude in defeat as well as in victory. This season Canada Trust has expanded to include a player from each competitive team as well as houseleague. The recipient will be chosen by the players under the guidance of the coach. The award winners for the 95-96 season were: TYKES: Amanda Martin, Laura Carver; NOVICES: Amanda Brushett, Sarah Attenborough, Vanessa Bennett, Kate Dagleish; ATOMS: Siarra Gougeon, Pamela Campbell, Maeghan Pirie, Christine Cashen; PEEWEES: Lindsay Doxtator, Shanna McIlmurray, Jackie Browning, Michelle Dowden, Tara Sharpe; BANTAM/MIDGETS: Stephanie Simpson, Michelle Serpa, Jodie Van Spronsen, Robin Rader; INTERMEDIATE/SENIORS: Sherry Moss, Elizabeth Hayden, Nancy Hurgett, Shelly Crawford.



### *CHRISTINE TUCKER (GOALIE)*

Wow, it's been ten years already; it seems just like yesterday. On February 21, 1977, the Tuckers were proud parents of a baby girl. This day was very exciting for them as they already had three sons. They dreamed for their little girl to grow up and become a figure skater or gymnast. But this was not to become reality.

I came to my parents with a little dream of my own -- to play hockey. They thought that this was simply a phase that would soon pass. After four years of constant pleading and countless long hours playing road hockey, they gave in.

At the age of eight, I was registered to play hockey for South London. I was the only girl on the team, and perhaps the only one in the entire league. This was not a factor to me, but my parents thought the boys would be hard on me, causing me to give up hockey, and perhaps fulfill their original dreams. Instead, I became more determined as the boys were very accepting of me.

As a minor Novice, I would have to play every position including goal. This idea didn't thrill my parents but as part of the team, they realized that I would have to take a turn. It was as a goaltender that my talents began to show, and by major Novice, I was playing goalie every other game and asked to play on the travel team.

It was during my second year of hockey (major Novice) that my parents heard rumors of a girls' hockey league being formed. They looked into it and discovered that every Sunday a group of girls would meet at Silverwoods arena, skate, and do drills. I attended, but I found it rather boring as I was used to a more structured league. Regardless, I continued to go as there was hope that they would have a team next year. Sure enough, the next year I was playing for the London Devilettes as a minor Atom.

During this year, I played on two Devilette teams -- houseleague, as well as Atom C travel. Furthermore, I had still not decided on a permanent position to play, so I played forward for the houseleague team, and goalie for the travel team. It was a very exciting and promising year as the Atoms went on to win the provincials.

After a successful first year, the Devilettes program began to grow and more travel teams were put together at different levels. As a second year Atom, I decided to play forward on the travel team. Once again, this team was very successful -- even after being moved up to the Atom A division. The possibility of repeating as provincial champs was looking good but unfortunately came down to a heartbreaking 1-0 loss.

By this time, my parents realized that this was not just a phase. It was as a Peewee that I finally made the decision to play goal and devote my skills entirely to the position.

At the age of fifteen, my dream was becoming a reality as this was the year they were holding tryouts for Team Ontario. After a full day of drills, I was pretty happy with my showing and was hopeful that I would make it to the next camp. It took a few weeks to get the phone call that every hockey player dreads -- the one stating that I had not been selected. I was simply wished good luck in the forthcoming hockey season. At this point, my parents thought I might give up the game but instead I worked harder and was more determined than ever to be the best goalie in Ontario. With the London Devilettes, I attained much success winning Provincials as a Peewee A, and again as a Midget A.

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As a Midget, I had one last chance to achieve my dream. Team Ontario tryouts were again being held. I was determined not to let this chance slip away and worked with my Devilette teammates for hours on the ice. Then, once again my hope faded. As a result of working so hard, I got a blister on my foot and could not get my skate on. The night before the tryouts, my parents and I searched unsuccessfully for a cushion for the blister. The next day, we arrived at the arena ready for the tryouts -- blister and all. When it was time to hit the ice, I wrapped my foot, forced my skate on, and went out and gave it my all. I had trouble skating, which must have been obvious to anyone watching, but I continued with the drills as best I could knowing full well that this was my last chance to make the Ontario team. Trying to compensate for my blistered foot, I pulled a hamstring. It was not too serious but bothered me just enough. By the final skate, I knew my chances were slipping away. It was a long car ride home.

I continued to play with my Devilette team -- which was doing very well -- but still waited for the dreaded call. Then one day, it came. However, it was not the news I thought. Instead, the lady on the other end informed me that I had been selected to attend the next camp. I couldn't believe it, my dream was still attainable.

There were several more camps to go through and before I knew it, I was a member of Team Ontario, and on a plane to Grande Prairie, Alberta for the Canada Games. It was after a week of playing and practicing that my dream was reached. It was even more than I could have imagined. Team Ontario went undefeated. I allowed only one goal in the 5-1 win over Saskatchewan and we brought home the gold.

This proved to be the beginning. When I returned home, my Devilette team was off to Niagara Falls to play in the Ontario Winter Games. What more could one ask for? My team came away with the gold medal and were once again provincial champions.

After enjoying so much success, it was time to move up. Normally that would be to intermediate, but four of my teammates and myself decided to try out for the Senior AA team who were just starting their second year in the league. We were all successful in making it, but what a wake up call it was. We were now playing in the big leagues, against teams from Toronto who had players from Team Canada. Instead of winning, we were losing and losing big.

This past year became a learning experience and made me realize how great the competition is. The only way to compete is to work hard and set goals for yourself as well as your team. I'm now returning to the AAA's and looking forward to another year of learning and developing my skills. After playing hockey for eleven years (ten with the Devilettes), my parents now have the same dreams and hope that one day I will be given the opportunity to tryout for Team Canada to play in the Olympics. If it doesn't happen, that's fine because the memories and friendships I have will last a lifetime.

Many thanks to the Devilettes and especially Jim Martin, who started this league ten years ago.

Christine Tucker



### **JENNIFER DEWAR (GOALIE)**

Jennifer Dewar was born in London on December 8th, 1973. She entered the world on a Saturday night during the first period of a Toronto Maple Leafs hockey game, and although I didn't know it at the time, that was an omen.

Jennifer's closest friends while growing up were Jason and Greg, two boys that lived on either side of her. Her mother was always trying to make a little girl of her, and Jennifer was only interested in doing what the "guys" were doing. She started playing road hockey one summer when the boys were short some players, and she loved it. We put Jenn into other sports like figure skating, swimming, and gymnastics, but she didn't really take to them.

Then in the fall of 1981, at age eight, she told her mother and I that she too wanted to register for ice hockey like the boys were. Her mother was not interested at all, but I was. Jennifer and I worked on mom for a couple of days until mom finally said OK... if you don't play goal! We signed her up with South London boys' association. The second practice Jennifer had the pads on, and stood proudly between the pipes. That first season her grandfather kept saying, "look at her out there, she's a natural."

Jennifer continued to play hockey with the South London houseleague until her last year of PeeWee 1985/86 when she played for the Byron Sabers "A" travel team. In 1986 she had to stop playing in the boys' associations because of her age, so she looked to the South London Girls' team with Jim Martin as coach. That season Jim's "Ball Furniture Refinishing" team went on to win the Lambton County Girls' Hockey Championship.

During the 1987/88 season, Jim Martin and a few of his friends put together a team of girls from all over the city to play exhibition games for a new organization called the London Devilettes Girls' Hockey Association. That was the first Devilette team to win a gold medal in the OWHA Provincial Championships. The game was played against the Mississauga Chiefs, in Mississauga, where we won in a shoot-out with Renee McAllister scoring the winning goal and Jenn making the big save.

Jenn continued to play for the Devilettes and in 1991 she was chosen to play for the Ontario Midget team in the Canada Winter Games held in Feb. in Prince Edward Island. That same year, her Devilette Midget A team played in the Ontario Winter Games in Barrie, Ontario. Both events were very exciting and made us proud as parents.

In the fall of 1991, Jennifer made history in Ontario, when she played in a high school hockey game for the Laurier Rams. That was the first time a girl played in a London Conference hockey game in Ontario.

The following year she went to play Senior AA women's hockey in Guelph with the Guelph Eagles. This is the league that she really enjoyed, playing against members of Team Canada, and meeting people like Cathy Philips. The following season 1993/94 would see her playing for the Hamilton Golden Hawks of the Senior AA league, and coached by Cathy Philips, the 1990 Team Canada star goalie. Jennifer also played for the Guelph Griffins women's university team that year and was coached by Sue Scherer, captain of the 1990 Team Canada. Sue would turn out to be the most influential person on Jenn's career. That season she was chosen to play on the Senior AA All-star team, the University All-star team and she was chosen as the Female Rookie Athlete of the Year at Guelph University.

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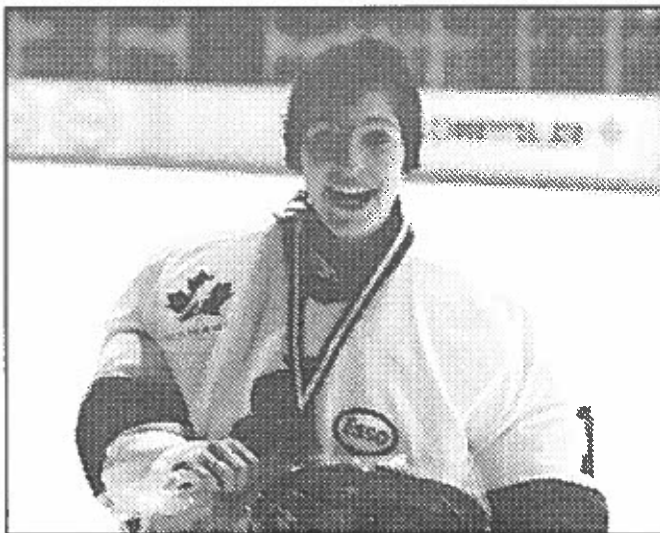
Jennifer returned to play hockey in London for the newly formed Devilettes Senior AA team, and was again chosen to play on the Senior AA All-star team.

But perhaps Jenn's most exciting season was 1995/96 when she was asked to play for the North York Aeros of the Senior AA league. The decision to leave London, and play for the Aeros was an extremely difficult one as her loyalties were with London, but her chances to be seen as a prospect for the 1997 Team Canada try-outs were in Toronto. The Aeros went on to be Ontario Provincial Champions, and represented Ontario in the Canadian National Championships in Moncton, New Brunswick. Jenn was again chosen to play on the Senior AA All-star team that season, as well as Most Valuable Goalie in the Provincial Championships. Then in the Nationals, she played in the final game losing in overtime to a very strong Quebec All-star team that was televised nationwide on TSN, and she was chosen as the Most Valuable Goalie in the Nationals. Quite a season!

She will again be playing in North York this season, and she still hopes to be invited to the Team Canada try-outs this fall. Above all, Jenn's greatest dream is to play in the Olympics with Team Canada.

Through her years in London, Jenn has enjoyed refereeing and helping out at various goalie clinics held by the Devilettes for their Houseleague and travel teams. She was also proud to be invited to speak at the annual Devilette banquet in 1991 about her experiences on Team Ontario at the Canada Winter Games.

Jennifer has played in many cities in Ontario, for many teams and coaches, but she is proud to state that she is from London, Ontario whenever asked.



**NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
Moncton, New Brunswick

***Player of The Game***  
***Team Ontario***

- *Female Rookie Athlete of the Year at Guelph University 1993-94.*
- *Named to the OWIAA All-star team 1995 and 1996.*
- *Named to the COWHL All-star teams 1994, 1995 and 1996.*
- *Voted Most Valuable Goaltender in the COWHL 1995-96*

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*Jennifer Dewar was voted 1995-96 MVP goaltender in the COWHL in senior women's play as well as MVP goaltender in the Canadian National Women's Hockey tournament held in Moncton, New Brunswick in 1996. She played on Team Ontario in the 1991 Canada Winter Games. In the senior AA circuit of the COWHL, Jen has played for the Guelph Eagles, the Hamilton Golden Hawks, the London Devilettes Girls' Hockey Association and is currently playing for the 1995-96 Ontario Provincial champions, the North York Aeros. She also plays varsity hockey for the University of Guelph where she is studying Business Administration in a BA program.*

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## LONDON DEVILETTES GIRLS' HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

### **EXECUTIVE 1986-1987**

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Vice-President: Al Kovacs  
Secretary: Maxine Hughes  
Treasurer: Charlaine Martin  
Registrar: Roger Dewar  
Public Relations Coordinator: Jim Martin  
Hockey Development Coordinator: Ron Cooper

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### **DIRECTORS:**

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Len Graat  
Cheryl Grant  
Frank Lamb  
Sharon Lamb  
Tammy Lamb  
Lee Anne Leonard  
Karen Mallette  
Kay Spettigue  
Jill Thompson

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### **EXECUTIVE 1988-1989**

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## LONDON DEVILETTES GIRLS' HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

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John Parsons  
Jean Pincombe  
Laura Pearce  
Claire Grasso  
Bev Cormier  
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### **EXECUTIVE 1991-1992**

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Treasurer: Charlene Martin  
Registrar: Laura Pearce  
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Hockey Development: Blake Dunlop

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Art Dewar	Connie Rice
Roger Dewar	Bob Burns
Marg Egan	Suzanne McAllister
Ron Vowles	John Black
John Parsons	Doug Barker
Jean Pincombe	Cindy Lavoie
Bev Cormier	Pat O'Grady
Gerry Cormier	

## LONDON DEVILETTES GIRLS' HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

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Registrar: Bob Rice  
Equipment: Brian George  
Bingo: Cindy George  
Ways and Means: Gail McCulligh  
Newsletter: Edith Hollingsworth  
Banquet: Jean Pincombe  
Photo: Daphne Burns  
Statistician: Bob Rice  
Tournament: Blake Dunlop  
Ice: Bob Rice  
Referee: Connie Rice  
Select: Bob Swarts  
Houseleague: Archie Blois  
Tyke: Rob Lane  
Novice: Art Dewar  
Atom: Lisa Darling  
Peewee: Lorraine Stade  
Sponsor: Dyanne Wildman  
P.R. Coordinator: Ric Leduc  
Bantam/Midget/Senior: Dave Birch

### *EXECUTIVE 1993-1994*

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V.P. Development: Doug Barker/Tom Wright  
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Treasurer: Nancy Van Spronson  
Registrar: Bob Rice  
P.R. Coordinator: Archie Blois/Natalie Craig  
Sponsor: Fred Schembri  
Equipment: Brian George  
Bingo: Teresa Wilson  
Ways and Means: Jessie Tallack  
Newsletter: Marie Blois/June Hoekstra  
Banquet: Jean Pincombe  
Photo: Daphne Burns  
Tournament: Doug Barker  
Ice: Bob Rice  
Referee: Sue Alvaro  
Select: Lorraine Stade  
Houseleague: Rob Lane  
Tyke: John Lavoie  
Novice: Art Dewar  
Atom: Lisa Darling  
Peewee: Roger Dewar  
Bantam/Midget/Senior: Murray Lane  
Booster Club: Edith Hollingsworth

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### *EXECUTIVE 1994-1995*

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V.P. Operations: Ric Leduc  
V.P. Administration: Connie Rice  
V.P. Development: Doug Barker  
Secretary: Daphne Burns  
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Registrar: Roger Dewar  
P.R. Coordinator: Natalie Craig  
Sponsor: Fred Schembri  
Equipment: Paul Nicholson  
Bingo: Connie Rice  
Ways and Means: Jessie Tallack  
Newsletter: June Hoekstra  
Banquet: Eva Barker

Photo: Lillian Sawchuk  
Tournament: Doug Barker  
Ice: Bob Rice  
Referee: Dyanne Wildman  
Select: Lorraine Stade  
Houseleague: Rob Lane  
Tyke: Sandy Martin  
Novice: Rob Lane  
Atom: Gerry Smithers  
Peewee: Chuck Farrugia  
Midget/Intermediate/Senior: Murray Lane  
Select League Convenor: Liz Dunlop  
Booster Club: Margaret Adams

## LONDON DEVILLETES GIRLS' HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

### *EXECUTIVE 1995-1996*

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Treasurer: Ker Ferguson  
Registrar: Roger Dewar  
P.R. Coordinator: Natalie Craig  
Sponsor: Lorraine Finlayson  
Equipment: John Pearce  
Bingo: Connie Rice  
Ways and Means: Jessie Tallack  
Booster Club: Judy Sullivan  
Newsletter: Fran Milliken  
Banquet/Coaches Appreciation: Ina Vanderhill  
Photo: Janet Burton  
Tournament: Rob Lane  
Ice: Bob Rice  
Referee: Dyanne Wildman/Derek Whitney  
Select: Don Alvaro  
Select League: Lorraine Stade  
Team Manager: Joanne Graat  
Houseleague/Tyke: Sandy Martin  
Novice: Don Harris  
Atom: Art Dewar  
Peewee: Gerry Smithers  
Bantam/Midget/Senior: Murray Lane

### *EXECUTIVE 1996-1997*

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V.P. Administration: Marilyn Wideman  
Secretary: Marg Stone  
Treasurer: Marilyn Wideman  
Registrar: Susan Elgie  
P.R. Coordinator: Natalie Craig  
Sponsor: Jean Maybrey  
Equipment: John Pearce  
Bingo Committee: Connie Rice/Joanne Graat/Teresa Wilson/Marilyn Wideman  
Ways and Means: Wendy Fisher  
Newsletter: Fran Milliken  
Banquet/Coaches Appreciation: Ina Vanderhill  
V.P. Development: Tom Milliken  
Photo: Janet Burton  
Tournament: Rob Lane  
Ice: Bob Rice  
Referee: Dyanne Wildman  
Select: Lorraine Stade  
Houseleague: Don Harris  
Tyke: Sara Davies  
Novice: Don Harris  
Atom: Art Dewar  
Peewee: Gerry Smithers  
Bantam/Midget: Robert Mundy  
Select League: Mike Masse  
Booster Club: Gail McNabb  
Senior: Darla Goulden  
Manager: Joanne Graat  
Communications: Roger Dewar  
Awards: Lorraine Finlayson



LONDON GAME IS:  
**Team U.S.A.**  
vs.  
**Team Sweden**  
April 3, 1997  
7:00 p.m.  
Thompson Arena

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### ANNUAL YEAR END BANQUET 1991



*PIZZA HUT supplies free pizza to all players and coaching staff*

The London Devilettes Girls' Hockey Association would like to extend their gratitude to all the sponsors, past and present.

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Three members of the London Devilette hockey program have received scholarships at two U.S. Ivy League schools. Wearing jerseys from Brown University are Sarah Burns, left, and Jill Graat, right. Sue Barnes will be playing for Yale University.

## All three were members of last year's midget A provincial champions.

By Kathy Rumleski  
*Free Press Reporter*

Even though they're modest in assessing their own skills, three London female hockey players have the talent to get them into Ivy League schools in the United States.

Sarah Burns and Jill Graat have been accepted at Brown University in Providence, R.I., while Susie Barnes will be attending Yale University in New Haven, Conn., in the fall.

The offer includes academic awards in excess of \$100,000 through the next four years.

All three are members of the London Devilette hockey program. Barnes and Graat attend OAC classes at Regina Mundi College and Burns recently completed her studies at St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School.

"You have to be brilliant to get in," said Devilette spokesperson Natalie Craig. "They're also super hockey players. It's really nice the three girls have been successful. They're great role models."

Craig said the Ivy League schools admit only 1,500 students annually from more than 20,000 applications worldwide.

"It was a nice Christmas present," said Graat, who received notice by mail in late December that she was being offered the academic award to go to Brown.

Coaches from the universities have been watching the talented trio the past year. Graat and Burns visited the Brown campus in November.

Burns was impressed with the school: "It's not like the rest; it's not stuffy. I didn't think I'd get in, so it was a nice surprise."

**LINEMATES:** All three were members of the midget A provincial championship team last season. This year, Burns plays on the Devillettes senior B team and Barnes and Graat are linemates on the senior AA team.

"I just have to look at them and shake their hands," AA coach John Pearce said. "Susie goes a mile a minute — this girl is incredible. Jill's biggest asset is her shot (which has been clocked at 63 miles per hour)."

Meanwhile, the Devillettes organization is getting ready to host its annual female hockey tournament, which begins Friday. Fifty-eight teams from around the province and the U.S. will participate in the novice through senior-division tournament.

Craig said the tournament is an opportunity for the public to watch some high-calibre play. "We're bound to see future Olympians."

### IF YOU GO

**What:** The sixth annual London Devillettes female hockey tournament.

**Where:** Argyle, Carling, Farquharson and Silverwoods arenas.

**When:** Friday, beginning at 6 p.m. through Sunday evening.

**Admission:** \$3 per day; \$8 for weekend pass.

### EXHIBITION GAME

**What:** Dutch national hockey team vs. London Devillettes senior AA.

**Where:** Brookside Arena.

**When:** Feb. 22, 8:30 p.m.

**Admission:** \$2.

## GIRLS HOCKEY LEAGUE IS FORMED



*Jim Martin is shown in this photo, taken by London Free Press Photographer Bill Smith, along with his daughters, all of whom play hockey. Joie 18, left, Chantele 10 and Vanessa 16, would like to play in an all girls hockey league here in London. The league is now formed and any girls interested should call Jim Martin (455-5800) or Roger Dewar (681-4456).*

## LONDON GIRLS HOCKEY ASSOCIATION FORMED

Following several meetings, a new Girls Hockey Association has been formed in London under the direction of President Darlene Walker. The group will be called LONDON

GIRLS HOCKEY ASSOCIATION and recently elected the following executives; President - Darlene Walker. Vice President - Al Kovacs. Secretary - Maxine Hughes. Treasurer - Charlene Martin. Registrar - Roger Dewar. Hockey Coordinator - Ron Cooper. V.P. of Administration - Jim Martin. Also, several directors were appointed to assist in running the organization. The Association is planning fund raising activities and will look to run on their own

without any local affiliation if possible. They have acquired ice time and presently have enough girls to start with one team. They have worked out a budget and are attempting to attract sponsors to help pay for sweaters. They will seek affiliation with the Ontario Women's Hockey Association and hopefully have full participation with them. Spokesman Jim Martin told us at the election meeting that all we have to do is let the public know that their girls can play in an "all girls" league

and we will get the players. Areas all around us have several girls teams and this might help us get started, by supplying some games. Our main goal will be to get the girls playing in their own age bracket. We are prepared to start right from "learn to skate" and teach the girls how to play hockey. Jim says they will take help from anyone willing to assist, especially where fund raising comes in. For further information, call Jim Martin (455-5800) or Roger Dewar (681-4456).

## Devilettes offer girls fun, travel, hockey



### MINOR HOCKEY

By Steve Green  
London Free Press

What the London Devilettes may have lost in quantity they more than make up for in quality.

That's the feeling of public relations co-ordinator Jim Martin as the Devilettes enter their first full season.

"We've got about 110 girls this year in our junior and senior divisions," Martin said. "We'll probably field an atom travel team, a peewee travel team and an intermediate (20 and under) travel team."

Those teams will be formed from the players in the house league system. Martin said there will be four atom-novice teams, forming the junior division, and three peewee-bantam-midget teams in the senior division. As well, he said there will be two "tyke" or learn-to-skate teams, where first-time players can develop at their own pace before joining a regular team.

As well, there will be a 13-and-under team and a 19-and-under team playing in the Lambton County league with teams from Parkhill, Thedford, Sarnia, Sarnia Township and Watford.

Martin said the numbers are down from last season, when the Devilettes consisted basically of two "promotional" teams, which played exhibition games during the season.

"We actually had about 130 girls out (last year). Some were ringette players who came out and decided hockey wasn't for them. But we're steadily getting registration and the girls we have now are really dedicated."

Martin has a vested interest in girls' hockey with three daughters playing the game. He's been in-

involved in girls' hockey for the past 10 years.

"We think we've got a good thing going here. We're leaving the registration open so anyone can still come out. And we can honestly say we've got a team for them to play on this year."

For years, ringette has been looked upon as the female version of hockey. Martin said the introduction of girls' hockey isn't a competitive development, merely an alternative.

"A lot of people are fixed in ringette. I don't think we've hurt the ringette program at all. They may have been a bit worried at first but I think it's starting to smooth out.

"Some of the girls are playing both but I find the girls who start out as hockey players aren't interested in ringette at this point. That's not saying they won't be."

Martin said there's no hard sell used to entice girls to play.

"We just say: 'Come out and try it; you're going to play with girls basically at your own level.' They've almost got to try it to see if it's what they want.

"We're not putting pressure on anyone. The parents are waiting to see what we have to offer."

Martin said he can understand parents' reluctance to let their daughters play hockey in light of the recent anti-violence campaign launched by the federal government but said those fears aren't warranted.

"There is no checking in intermediate and under. There are even some senior levels where there is no checking. I say no checking instead of non-contact because you can't play hockey without some contact."

With ice time at a premium, one might expect girls' hockey to take a back seat to more established winter activities. Not so, Martin said.

"We have had no problems. The PUC has co-operated 100 per cent, more than 100 per cent. I'd say. We've got ice every Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Wednesday."



Thursday, January 25, 1996

photo: Bill Ironside  
The London Free Press

**TORONTO BOUND:** Nine year old Heather Lane of the London Devilettes Novice A team gives a cheer before leaving for Toronto on Wednesday. Lane was among participants in an on-ice demonstration by players from the Ontario Women's Hockey Association between periods of Toronto's 2-2 tie with the Chicago Blackhawks at Maple Leaf Gardens.



# Eight Devilettes earn Ontario tryout

The midget-age players will be among about 200 at four regional camps.

By Rob Mason  
The London Free Press

Fresh off a provincial championship, eight players from the London Devilettes midget A girls hockey team have a chance to go on to a higher level.

The eight — goalie Christine Tucker, defence Kim Shillington, Tara Vowles and Sarah Burns, and forwards Lyndsey Howard, Leona Baker, Jill Graat and Susie Barnes — have been asked to try out for the Ontario team which will compete in the 1995 Canada Winter Games in Grande Prairie, Alta., in February.

Three members of the Devilettes bantam team and one London peewee have also been

invited to the final of four regional tryout camps, to be held May 14 in Sarnia. The bantams are defender Jennifer Wildman and forwards Carrie Hilton and Melissa Remison, and the peewee is forward Celina Isen.

More than 200 girls under 18 years old will attend the four regional camps, from which about 50 will be selected to attend another camp in Mississauga in June.

**WINTER GAMES:** The top players from that camp will train and play exhibition games through the summer and fall and 20 players will then be named to the Winter Games team.

The team will be coached by Ken Dufton, a senior AA coach from Toronto who also guided the Ontario team to the gold medal at the initial Canadian under-18 championships last year. He will be assisted by Bruce Mullen from Nepean and former national team goalie Cathy Phillips of Dundas.

The tryouts — which include two thirds of

the 12 player roster — cap a tremendous season for the London midgets (16-17 years old), who won five of the seven tournaments they entered and placed second in the other two. The Devilettes also won the playoff title in the Central West league.

The team won four straight games, including a 1-0 win over Peterborough in the final, to take the Ontario Women's Hockey Association tournament in Mississauga on April 22-24. The Devilettes allowed just one goal in the four games, completing a season in which they gave up only 13 goals in 29 games and Tucker recorded 19 shutouts.

"I've never had a team come close to this (level of success)," said head coach Bob Burns. "These girls only lost three games in all the tournaments they were in, and two of those three were to an intermediate team (one age group higher)."

The provincial title was the second for this group of girls, who won as peewees after placing second in Ontario as atoms.

# Senior AA addition to London tourney bonus for Devilettes

Along with the AA tournament, the London organization's event has attracted 900 players on 53 teams.

By Steve Coad  
The London Free Press

The London Devilettes were planning to hold their fifth annual girls' and women's hockey tournament this weekend anyway.

Adding the Ontario senior AA championship, the highest level in women's hockey, to the lineup is "a great big bonus," says Natalie Craig, public relations director for the Devilettes organization, which offers house league and travel competition to about 500 female players seven years old and up.

The Devilettes, the biggest female hockey organization in Canada, won the senior AA tournament with a bid to the Ontario Women's Hockey Association, Craig says. "We have the facilities (in London), and a good organization in place."

Along with the senior AA tournament, which will be played entirely at Nichols Arena, the tournament has attracted about 900 players on 53 teams in 11 divisions from novice to senior A.

Teams are coming from such far-flung locations as Chicago, Michigan, Ottawa, Kingston and Cornwall.

Preliminary-round games, which begin tonight at 6 p.m. at Argyle Arena, take place at Argyle, Nichols and Carling (Saturday only) arenas. Championship games will be played Sunday afternoon at Argyle and Nichols.

The senior AA field includes seven teams from the Central Ontario Women's Hockey League: the defending champion North York Aeros, considered a dynasty in women's hockey in the province, Mississauga Chiefs, Toronto Red Wings, Scarborough Sting, Peterborough Skyway, London Devilettes and Hamilton Golden Hawks.

**EXCELLENT HOCKEY:** Al Dawson, the Central Ontario league's communications officer and general manager of the Mississauga team, says: "North York is the slight favorite, and we're second. Whoever wins, the hockey will be excellent."

Spectators will have an opportunity to see a number of players off Canada's 1994 national team, which won the world championship: centre Angela James, right-winger Marianne Grnak, forward-defender Nathalie Rivard and defenders Geraldine Heaney and Cheryl Pounder from North York; right-winger Karen Nystrom of Toronto Red Wings; centre Margo Page and forward-defender Cassie Campbell of Mississauga. Another Mississauga player, left-winger Heather Ginzel played on Canada's 1992 world champions, but missed last year's worlds because of an injury.

The senior AA winner advances to the Canadian championship March 23-26 in Summerside, P.E.I.

Meanwhile, the Devilettes program is growing by leaps and bounds, Craig says.

"We're up 20 per cent this year. Last year, we had about 400 playing house league and travel. This year, it's about 500. It's been very gratifying."



## She shoots! She scores! (Move over, guys)



SAM McLEOD / The London Free Press

Kristen Buckley, 11, prepares for practice with a London Devilettes house league team at Argyle Arena on Thursday night.

The game is now the hottest sport on ice — and the local area is at the centre of the new explosion.

By Noel Gallagher  
The London Free Press

**I**TS RAPID GROWTH has women's hockey being hailed the hottest sport on ice. To Londoners Martha Hart, a 31-year-old police officer, and 10-year-old grade schooler Katrina Craig, it means a greater chance to play the game they love.

"And it's *real* hockey," says Connie Rice, president of the London Devilettes Girls' Hockey Association, the largest organization of its kind in the world.

"We're here to give the girls the opportunity to do what they want to do — play this game."

More than 560 girls and women are registered for the current season with the 36 Devilette teams (24 in house leagues and 12 competitive travel) whose player ages range from tyke (under six years old) to senior (21 and over) level.

The association's 25-per-cent jump in membership (last season's figure, 453) puts London and area at the centre of the female hockey explosion in Ontario.

home to more than 60 per cent of the 30,000 Canadian women and girls registered in hockey leagues.

The profile of women's hockey has been raised by its debut at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Japan and, locally, by the creation of the Devilettes Senior AA senior team, entering its inaugural season in the Central Ontario Women's Hockey League.

"The Olympics and our new senior team give our players some things to shoot for," says Rice, who predicts her organization's membership will reach the 1,000 mark by the end of the decade.

Rice tags wider exposure as the key to the sport's soaring popularity.

"Our players talk it up to their friends," she adds. "Or girls go to the rink to watch their brothers play, see us playing and say, 'Hey, I want to do that.'"

**FIGURE SKATERS:** That idea still surprises parents who may prefer their daughters to become figure skaters and stay clear of the rough and tumble hockey rink.

"I was shocked. I never thought I'd have a daughter playing hockey," recalls Natalie Craig, mother of Katrina, the 10-year-old Delaware Central School pupil who began playing organized hockey four years ago.

"I'd love to play in the Olympics — some day," says Katrina, the only female player on a Mt. Brydges boys' team, the Atom Cougars, and a member of the London Devilettes Atom B team.

"I'm still a bit frightened, sometimes, when she's playing with the boys. There's no body-checking allowed but their aggression level is higher," adds Craig, the Devilettes' public relations director.

"But Katrina's got the talent and the right attitude."

Katrina, a smooth-skating centre, said she enjoys playing for teams on both sides of the gender gap. "The boys are fast and more aggressive and I have a lot of fun with the girls because they're my friends."

"There's no question the image of our sport is changing," says Martha Hart, a 31-year-old London Police constable and captain of the fledgling Senior AA team. "People are starting to

realize that women can — and do — play hockey."

"It used to be a dead end when we reached age 18, there was no place to play," adds Hart, whose hockey career began in Grade 6. "Now, the girls coming through the ranks realize there is somewhere to go — maybe not a professional league yet but a senior level team and, perhaps, even the Olympics."

Female players have a different attitude about the game, says Hart: "From an early age, boys and their parents approach hockey with the idea it's a possible career, a sort of step-by-step progress to the NHL. For girls it's a less-serious, more-fun pursuit. Hockey's a release for me, a time when I don't have to think of anything except the game I'm in. I love the competition, win or lose."

Female hockey is the solution for girls and young women who want to play the game but have no desire to be on male teams, says Doug Barker, the Devilettes vice-president in charge of development and general manager of the fledgling Senior AA squad.

"They try the boys' team for a season and find they just don't want to be there, so they quit hockey," explains Barker.

"Being on their own gives the girls more opportunities and our registration figures reflect that."

He says girls are easier to coach than their male counterparts.

"That's because they really want to learn the game. The guys already think they know it all."



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# *Autographs:*

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