

# “Ringette in Alberta: A History from Backyards to Arenas”

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Ringette has existed for over thirty years, yet when discussing women's team ice sports, more often than not women's hockey is what comes to mind. Ringette has a rich history, especially in Alberta, that has yet to be fully examined and recorded. This paper looks at the development and growth of the sport, specifically in Alberta, and ultimately asks whether or not this sport has had the success it should. Is there a possibility it can break free from its existence as a niche sport and become more mainstream, or is it destined to remain a niche sport?

The development of ringette has its beginnings in the increasing expectations for more equal sports by the female generation of the 1960's. This time brought a revived interest in more sports than those traditionally encouraged, which had included figure skating and swimming. These were sports that allowed women to retain the traditional ideals of femininity, even going so far as to supply costumes with skirts. Even then, women weren't supposed to perspire while playing these sports. Instead, they were supposed to look "more graceful like ballerinas".<sup>1</sup> Other events were taking place around the same time that would make a huge difference, both in how women expected to be treated and in how they viewed themselves. One major event was the release of the birth control pill in 1960. This development freed women to begin to see themselves as more equal to men in areas of work, responsibility and ultimately, sports. Women wanted more types of sport and equal opportunity in those sports. So how did ringette get developed?

The development of ringette started in Ontario. It was interesting to discover that it was a male who invented and introduced the sport in 1963. Sam Jacks was the director of Parks and Recreation in North Bay, Ontario, who enjoyed developing many youth activities. He had three sons who played hockey, but Jacks felt that girls should have some kind of ice sport to play as

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ann Hall, *The Girl and the Game: a History of Women's Sport in Canada*, (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2002), 119.

well. His game was designed to “keep people moving and encourage participation”.<sup>2</sup> Red McCarthy (Director of Recreation in Espanola) began to experiment with the rules created by Jacks as games were played. The first official rule book was created by the Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario in the hope that this sport would be accepted in a way that other sports which had been created for women (like broomball and hockey) were not.<sup>3</sup>

The first ringette season took place in North Bay in 1964/65 and gained the support of local communities. The sport’s rules continued to be adjusted until 1965, when an official rule book was created. As the original Directors moved to southern Ontario, they took the sport with them and shared it within their new communities. In the first two years, the sport spread quickly through Ontario and then Quebec. Clearly, ringette was filling a niche in feminine sports. By 1967, ringette continued its growth by moving west to Manitoba. By 1969, sixteen local associations joined together to start the Ontario Ringette Association.<sup>4</sup> At first, the association was run by volunteers, but by 1973, the Ontario Association had to hire a full-time executive director. Ringette was well established in these three provinces.

Ringette in the other western provinces, including Alberta, took more time. While the first game in British Columbia took place in Langley in 1973 and began to gain in popularity, it was not until the following season that ringette began to spread through the rest of the country in earnest. Ringette was introduced into Alberta by those who had recently moved into the area from the east. In Alberta, it was Fred Rusnak who brought the idea of a new game for girls to Sherwood Park in 1974. This first glimpse of the game was followed by an introductory clinic sponsored by the Alberta Recreation Department in Leduc. This clinic was very successful in the

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<sup>2</sup> Ringette Canada, Ringette Canada Website, <http://www.ringette.ca/Content/About/Hall%20of%20Fame/Inductees/Sam%20Jacks.asp?langid=1>

<sup>3</sup> Rhonda Derbecker, *The History of Ringette in Canada*. (Ontario: University of Waterloo, 1980), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 12.

spread of the sport in Alberta, as it “was attended by over sixty representatives from throughout the province” and started twenty-five communities playing the sport.<sup>5</sup> This one clinic expanded into multiple clinics in Red Deer, Spruce Grove and Big Valley. It was well received by all and interest in the sport continued to grow.

There was a secondary event to this first introductory clinic, as a committee was created to initiate a provincial association. The constitution and by-laws of Ringette Alberta were created at the end of 1975. Ringette Alberta joined other associations already growing in the province, including Sherwood Park Ringette Association, and promotion was their primary goal. Promotion became a big part in the spread of ringette across western Canada. From the first video being created in 1965 to introductory clinics in ringette, associations became important in the expansion of the sport. In the 1975-76 session, exhibition games were played in many communities to feature and increase interest in the sport. The exhibition games became important to showcase ringette as a friendly, team-oriented sport. The first invitational tournament in Leduc was in January 1976, followed by another in the city of Edmonton in February. Tournaments were publicized in order to get more girls interested in the sport. The session of 1976 was one of improvement and growth, but it was merely the start to ringette in Alberta.

By the late 1970's interest regarding ringette spread into smaller communities. The already existing infrastructure of rinks for hockey and figure skating made the spread of this sport relatively easy; Ringette Alberta only needed to encourage and educate the communities to play the sport. Coaching clinics were held around Alberta at regular intervals. Ringette gained popularity and the registration numbers showed growth throughout Alberta. Edmonton boasted a hundred and fifteen girls, Sherwood Park came in second with an hundred and five players, Big

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<sup>5</sup> Ringette Alberta, *Ringette Alberta: The First Twenty Years*, (Edmonton, Ringette Alberta, 1996), 3.

Valley followed with one hundred participants, and Fultonvale (just south of Sherwood Park) registered twelve girls. Other teams playing included Spruce Grove, who had two teams, and Leduc with one team. By the time Alberta held its first Provincials for ringette in 1979, there were two divisional tournaments. The winners then continued on to the “First Ringette Canada National Championships” in Winnipeg. Alberta showed the beginnings of its future excellence by taking bronze in both Junior Belles and Belles.<sup>6</sup>

Within three years, ringette in Alberta had grown to over nine hundred participants with more and more communities joining to play ringette, including Calgary. Ringette was continuing to expand across the nation as well, as “by 1980 the game was being played in both the Yukon and Northwest Territories and in all the Canadian provinces except Prince Edward Island”.<sup>7</sup>

As ringette grew in numbers, more events took place during its seasons. In 1980, to continue to promote ringette as a sport, exhibition games were played at the first Alberta Winter Games. Provincials were held on a yearly basis in different towns with a division championship taking place in each. Starting only with Belles (aged 17 and under), Ringette Alberta expanded its provincial tournaments to include Junior Belles, Debs and level ‘A’ teams. Invitational tournaments continued throughout Alberta as well.

Ringette in Alberta continued its pattern of growth going into the 1980’s. By 1983, associations under Ringette Alberta quadrupled from six to twenty-seven. Participants jumped from 1600 in 1983 to 2105 players in 1984. These numbers coincided with the development of new schools for the study of ringette and in 1984, one of these schools hosted over a hundred

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Rhonda Derbecker, *The History of Ringette in Canada*. (Ontario: University of Waterloo, 1980), 57.

players.<sup>8</sup> These promotional events now were spread with a Ringette Newsletter by 1984. The goal of the newsletter was the circulation of news about ringette in Alberta. New communities joining into the ringette world and results from tournaments and other events now had a place to be featured.

Tournaments like provincials, with added divisions of the Debs, the Alberta Winter Games and National Championships (which began in 1979) continued annually by Ringette Alberta and Ringette Canada. Alberta continued to send teams to nationals and though they did not always win, players were selected from the 1984-1986 seasons for the National Team All-Stars.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, new regional and provincial tournaments made their debut. Western Canada, in 1983, held its first tournament, the Western Canada House League Friendship Games, across the nation. Three teams went to Regina, Winnipeg and Vancouver to show Alberta's talent for this one tournament. Provincially, the first Air Canada Silver Ring Tournament was held in Edmonton in 1984. This event was attended by 48 teams and became an annual event for Ringette Alberta.

Over the next five years, ringette as a sport maintained its level of play through tournaments and its associations and levels of participation in Alberta reached 3476 players.<sup>10</sup> Alberta's teams were gaining in experience and ability as in 1988 at the 10<sup>th</sup> Canadian Ringette Championships, one of the Alberta teams won gold, and over 10 players were chosen for the National Team. Ringette Alberta also continued to create newsletters like "Ringin' Out" to spread the word of Alberta's excellence.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ringette Alberta, *Ringette Alberta: The First Twenty Years*, (Edmonton, Ringette Alberta, 1996), 8.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 11.

However, changes were occurring, not for the game itself but for the individuals surrounding the game. Until the late 1980's ringette was only played by females. The initial growth of the sport, however, brought it to the attention of more parents than those with girls. By 1987, the issue of boys and ringette became a topic of interest. As ringette was created as a women's sport, the question became: should boys be allowed to play on any team? Boys, in the late 1980's were not encouraged to do so and many associations even would not allow them to play at the provincial level. Most people felt that ringette should remain as it was initially, intended as a women only sport. They felt that boys had ample opportunities in other ice sports.

To understand how ringette is different from other ice sports, like hockey, an understanding of the rules of the game is important. Ringette is a team sport like hockey, but there are many fundamental differences. Ringette derives its name from the use of a circular ring used in combination with a hockey stick with its blade removed. By stabbing the ring with the ringette stick, players are able to move it about the rink and score goals on the opponent's net. Each team consists of eleven to seventeen players, with five players and a goalie on the ice at a time. Ringette periods are twenty minutes, but there are only two periods instead of hockey's three, and there is a ten minute "rest" period between periods.

Two important rules that make ringette different are the use of the blue lines and the ringette line.<sup>12</sup> Ringette players have to pass over the two blue lines on the rink. The reason for this is to stress teamwork between the players. As well, the ring cannot be passed over both lines at once. The other rule creates defensive, offensive, and center zones. The ringette line is the red line on top of the free circles between the blue line and the goalie at each end. Only three

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<sup>12</sup> see figure 2.

players from each team and the defending goalie are allowed past this line.<sup>13</sup> This has not changed since the 1970's.

There are many things that have changed concerning the organization and officiating of the game. In the first rule book of ringette, a different game was played than the current version. First of all, there were only two divisions for those under fourteen and those over fourteen. This changed as more girls became involved in the sport. If you were to watch one of the first games in these divisions, you would see that the equipment was visibly different. Back then, "ski slacks or similar snug fitting clothing or any uniform pullover, sweat top or sweater" could be worn to play the game.<sup>14</sup> Male ice sports at the same had required protective padding and uniform jerseys. As it was a sport for females, it was not expected that there would ever be a need for protective clothing. Another difference had to do with the position of the players and the sticks they used. The positions were: defenders, who carried red sticks; forwards, who used yellow sticks; and centers, who carried white sticks. The goalie's stick was pink. The sticks were to help the officials see that all players stayed in their zones. There were three zones for ringette players. Defenders could only play in their defensive zone and the center zone, forwards could only play in the offensive zone and the center zone, and the center player could play everywhere.<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to wonder how much the different coloured sticks were part of an unconscious condescending attitude current at the time - that girls would have difficulty knowing who had to play where and so the coloured sticks would help them from being confused.

Another area of the rules that have changed concerns violations. Women players got penalties for what was considered to be a "minor foul" for two major reasons - by using

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<sup>13</sup> Ringette Canada, Ringette Canada Website, <http://www.ringette.ca/Content/Officiating/Rules/65RuleBook.asp?langid=1>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



‘offensive language’ or deliberate attempts to harm. Both these penalties would result in banishment from the game. Another interesting violation was being given a penalty if “any team member [spoke] to officials”.<sup>16</sup>

These rules stood until after the late 1970’s when the rules began to be challenged and changed. Under the old rules, only two divisions were created, but as the sport expanded, there was the need for divisions in multiple age groups. Petites (ten and under), Tweens (twelve and under), Junior Bells (fourteen and under), Belles (seventeen and under), Debs (eighteen and over), and Ladies (twenty and over), made up the new organization of ringette across Canada.<sup>17</sup> Eventually even this was not sufficient to deal with the participation of women and it became essential to group players into teams based on ability and skills as well as age. The trend started again in Ontario and spread throughout Canada. The more skilled level of ‘A’ and the secondary level of ‘B’ were used to “provide an opportunity for the more competitive girls to play”.<sup>18</sup>

Other changes during the 1980’s occurred regarding the rules for penalties. Original violations such as talking to the officials were abandoned. New expanded penalties included rules on raising the ringette stick above hip level. The physical contact rules were further development to adapt to the faster and more experienced play. Other rules that changed included : taking out the colored ringette sticks to showcase the position of each player. This way of defining the defensive, offensive and center players was felt to be no longer needed as the game continued to grow and shift. These changes were all done by the middle of the 1980’s.<sup>19</sup>

A major change during the first twenty years was the development and implementation of more protective equipment. From just pants and a sweater, ringette players had to have a team

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ringette Alberta, Ringette Alberta: The First Twenty Years, (Edmonton, Ringette Alberta, 1996), 20-21.

<sup>18</sup> Rhonda Derbecker, The History of Ringette in Canada. (Ontario: University of Waterloo, 1980), 45.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 20-21.

uniform that was numbered on both sides. The use of hockey equipment or other substitutions like knee and elbow pads and even some genital protection was enforced. Gloves and a helmet with mask and chin strap were also included in the new requirements for ringette equipment. This was a drastic change from the original rules of player's dress and helped to establish ringette as a serious form of play.

There have been few other rule changes in ringette during the 1990s and 2000s, but one major change was the addition of the 30 second clock. This rule states that players have 30 seconds once they are in possession of the ring, to get it down the ice and take a shot on the opposing team's net.<sup>20</sup> The purpose of this rule was to make the sport faster and more challenging by preventing "ring ragging" or keeping possession of the ring for long periods of time by constantly passing the ring back and forth between players on the same team. By making the sport faster and more challenging, it was hoped that ringette would be more appealing and exciting to potential players and spectators of the sport. The speed of the sport has also had some negative effects on the game. Although ringette games have been televised many times, the sport has failed to really be picked up on a regular basis by television stations. It seems that ringette is too fast-paced for television.<sup>21</sup> Since ringette only has two periods of twenty minutes each, and constant movement due to the 30 second clock rule, there are few breaks in play, and this means that network programmers cannot fit in their commercials. Ringette is failing to be broadcast to a wider audience and gain increased recognition because it does not fit in to television formatting.

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<sup>20</sup> Curtis Stock, "Landing Worlds big boost for ringette in Alberta," The Edmonton Journal, January 27, 2001.

<sup>21</sup> John Short, "Ringette too rapid for TV," The Edmonton Sun, April 6, 2008.

Throughout the 1990's and into the new millennium, ringette has continued to grow and develop in Alberta. At the beginning of the 1990's ringette continued to find its way into small rural communities in Alberta, like Rockyford where the first ringette season began in 1991.<sup>22</sup> In 1990, the first ringette World Championships were held in Gloucester, Ontario, which the Alberta team, as one of the two teams that Canada sent to the championships, won. The team was considered to be the underdog in the competition, but "Alberta considered itself among the favourites at the tournament" due to superior skating skills.<sup>23</sup> The 1996 World Championships, which were held in Sweden, was the first year that Canada did not send two teams to represent the country in the World Championships.<sup>24</sup> More international teams were beginning to enter the tournament, and Canada did not want to have two teams that competed against each other for talent and medals, as in previous years, one Canadian team had had to knock the other out of a spot at competing for the gold medal.

By 1991, ringette was included in the Canada Winter games, and the Alberta team even won gold that year. The Alberta team also won gold at the Canada Winter games in 1995. Not only did the Winter Games increase exposure of ringette in Alberta and Canada, they also showed that Alberta teams excelled in the sport. In 1997, at the fifteenth annual Silver Ring Tournament in Edmonton, 108 out of the 109 teams participating came from Alberta.<sup>25</sup> The ringette community was clearly strong in Alberta at this time.

Several prominent ringette events were hosted in Alberta during this period. Calgary hosted the Canadian National Championships for ringette in 1990, where Alberta teams won

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<sup>22</sup> Ringette Alberta, *Ringette Alberta: The First Twenty Years*, (Edmonton, Ringette Alberta, 1996), 43.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Tychkowsky, "Queens of the Ring," *The Edmonton Sun*, February 8, 1990.

<sup>24</sup> Joanne Ireland, "Gold medal at end of long ringette trail" *The Edmonton Journal*, April 21, 1996, sec. D.

<sup>25</sup> Jim Matheson, "Skating Rings Around the Competition," *The Edmonton Journal*, January 3, 1997, sec. A.

gold in each of the Junior, Belle, and Deb divisions, and specifically the host teams from Calgary won gold in the Belle and Deb divisions. Registration numbers in 1991 increased slightly, by 53 players from 3418 to 3471, although this increase is not very significant, the numbers in the 1992 increased greatly to 3920 players.<sup>26</sup>

In 1998 Edmonton hosted the Canadian Ringette Championships. More than 700 players on 33 Canadian teams came to play for national titles.<sup>27</sup> The event gained quite a bit of attention from print media in Alberta leading up to, during, and after the Championships. TSN also televised highlights of the championships.<sup>28</sup> This type of exposure, while informing people outside of the ringette community about the game, the rules, and important people who were involved in the sport, did not seem to translate to increased participation. Registration did not increase, and in fact, Ringette Alberta had the exact same number of participants (4249) from the 1997/98 season to the 1998/99 season.<sup>29</sup>

In 2002, Edmonton hosted the World Ringette Championships. Over 3 800 fans were present to watch the gold medal game between Canada and Finland (which the Canadian team won 3-1).<sup>30</sup> The event was highly promoted and garnered much media attention. CBC showed the whole championship game live. This broadcasting marked the first time a full ringette game was shown live on a national network.<sup>31</sup> This exposure did seem to have a slight effect on

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<sup>26</sup> Ron Betts, e-mail message to authors, March 30, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Ray Turchansky, "First Belle division title then ball," *The Edmonton Journal*, April 6, 1998.

<sup>28</sup> John Short, "Ringette growing – for all the right reasons," *The Edmonton Journal*, March 31, 1998.

<sup>29</sup> Betts, e-mail.

<sup>30</sup> Collin Gallant, "Goalies steal the show in ringette final," *The Edmonton Journal*, December 1, 2002.

<sup>31</sup> Dan Barnes, "A golden day for Canada, the sport of ringette," *The Edmonton Journal*, December 1, 2002, sec. C.

registration numbers for Ringette Alberta. For the 2001/02 season 4394 ringette players were registered, and in the 2002/03 season 4463 players registered.<sup>32</sup> However, for the amount of attention this event gained, and the increased exposure of the sport to the general public, the popularity of the sport did not seem to increase as much as it should.

Calgary also hosted the 2004 Canadian Ringette Championships and St. Albert hosted the 2008 CRCs. For the 2004 games, the registration numbers for the subsequent years did not reflect the level of attention and promotion of ringette that comes with these types of events. It seems that while hosting events in Alberta does increase the exposure of ringette in Canada, the effects on the popularity of and participation in the sport in Alberta are minimal. The sport remains a niche sport that is mostly played by those who have previous connections to the game, and is watched mainly by players and their families. The key to increasing the popularity of the sport lies elsewhere.

The year 2004 was a major year in the development of ringette in Alberta. In this year, the National Ringette League was launched in Canada. The league had sixteen teams at the beginning in three divisions. The Western division was made up of eight teams, two from Edmonton – WAM and Edge – and one from Calgary. Today, Edge no longer plays in the league. The League allows women over the age of 18 to re-enter competition at a higher level of play, and keep up their skill level from September until April.<sup>33</sup> Approximately two hundred fifty players, including twenty five of the national team players, were involved when the league first launched.<sup>34</sup> These women benefit from the increased ability to play at a higher level.

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<sup>32</sup> Betts, email.

<sup>33</sup> John Korobanik, "Ringette Canada launches 16-team competition," *The Edmonton Journal*, November 5, 2004, sec. D.

<sup>34</sup> The Canadian Press, "Ringette in the league," *The Edmonton Sun*, November 5, 2004.

A ringette team was also created at the University of Alberta in 2004; although it was not a varsity team, it was the first time that ringette had been played at the club level at the University.<sup>35</sup> The team initially played in the Deb A league and hoped to gain varsity status. In 2005, the team was denied official university sports status (so it cannot be called the Pandas), because there were only ten university ringette teams in Canada and twenty were needed in order to gain official status.<sup>36</sup>

Ringette in Alberta has traditionally excelled and been successful. Many of the world and national championship teams have been made up of several players from Edmonton. The Alberta World Champions in 1990 included eight women from Edmonton: Tamara McKernan, Susan Olson, Diana Kondrosky, Cindy Annala, Lyndsay Wheelens, Anne Gillespie, Tanya Orr, and Janine Wood.<sup>37</sup> The 2000 Canadian World championship ringette team, which won a silver medal, was made up of six women from Edmonton who all played for the Edmonton Ringette Club: Michelle MacKinnon, Maria McKenzie, Alexis Snowdon, Megan Todd, Laura Warner, and Jenn Williams.<sup>38</sup> The 2004 Canadian World Championship team included seven Edmonton athletes.<sup>39</sup> Former executive director of Ringette Alberta, Tamara McKernan, stated in 2001 that the “Edmonton Ringette Club is the best local ringette association in the world... [because] it is the best organized and has the best volunteers.”<sup>40</sup> Ron Betts of Ringette Alberta, seems to agree

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<sup>35</sup> Tait, “Sounds of ringette ringing at the U of A,” *The Edmonton Journal*, February 17, 2004.

<sup>36</sup> Cam Tait, “University of Alberta ringette club denied official CIS status,” *The Edmonton Journal*, February 9, 2005.

<sup>37</sup> Tychkowsky, “Queens of the Ring.”

<sup>38</sup> Stock, “Landing Worlds.”

<sup>39</sup> Carrie McFadzean, “Athletes compete to be ladies of the ring,” *The Edmonton Examiner*, November 24, 2004.

<sup>40</sup> Stock, “Landing Worlds.”

that Edmonton's early success in ringette is at least due in part to superior organization of the Edmonton community. In addition, ringette came to the communities around Edmonton before the game was developed in other areas of Alberta, so Edmonton's success may be caused by the fact that it existed in this area first. Mr. Betts feels that although Edmonton enjoyed early success, Calgary has now caught up and is exceeding Edmonton's success due to increased organization of local ringette associations in the area.<sup>41</sup> According to an *Edmonton Journal* article the Silver Ring tournament in Edmonton is the second largest ringette tournament in Canada, while the Gold Ring tournament in Calgary is the largest.<sup>42</sup> Calgary even has a varsity ringette team, the University of Calgary Dinos. Areas like St. Albert also have surpassed Edmonton with participation levels, as the sport shifts more from urban and rural centres into wealthy suburban areas. For the last decade the registration numbers in St. Albert have been higher than those of Edmonton.

Ringette in Alberta has been extremely successful on the national and international levels, no matter what the participation level. From 1990 until 2008 at least one Alberta team won a gold medal at the Canadian Ringette Champions (CRCs) each year, except for in 2006 where Alberta won silver in each division (Junior, Belle, and Open Division). The only year Alberta did not win any medal at the CRCs was 1984, and in 1990 and 1996, the Alberta teams won gold in every category – the Junior, Belle, and Deb divisions.<sup>43</sup> Also as previously mentioned many Alberta players are included on the World Championship teams. In the 1992 World Championships, Canada West, represented by Alberta, defeated Canada East, represented

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<sup>41</sup> Ron Betts, interview with the authors, March 19, 2010.

<sup>42</sup> David DiCenzo, "Ringette means family fun for Feehan clan," *The Edmonton Journal*, February 8, 1998.

<sup>43</sup> Ringette Canada, Ringette Canada Website, <http://www.ringette.ca/Content/Home.asp?langid=1>.

by Ontario, in the gold medal game, and another team from Alberta was sent to represent Canada at the 1996 World Championships.<sup>44</sup>

One reason that ringette has been so successful in Alberta is that it traditionally has had more participants than other provinces in Canada. Despite having only the fourth largest population of all Canadian provinces (at 3 595 900 in 2008), since the 1992-1993 season, Alberta has had the second largest registration numbers for ringette, only behind Ontario.<sup>45</sup> A greater number of participants means that there is a larger pool from which to draw in order to create competitive, higher level teams. Alberta may have more participants because of the number of high profile events that have been hosted in the province. Although participation numbers from year to year do not seem to be affected, the events may have kept registration up compared to other provinces.

There is a perception that the sport of ringette is declining in popularity in Alberta, but through looking at registration numbers, it is clear that this is not the case. In fact, registration numbers seem to be increasing, and in some areas participants have had to be turned away due to a lack of facility availability.<sup>46</sup> As of 2008, registration in Alberta was the highest it has ever been at 5050, with numbers increasing every year since 2004.<sup>47</sup> One of the reasons that this perception of decline exists is because ringette is a niche sport. It is well known in the ringette community, but it is still largely unrecognized in mainstream society in Alberta. Although the sport is well over thirty years old, newspaper publications continue to include a list of the rules

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<sup>44</sup> Ringette Alberta, *Ringette Alberta: The First Twenty Years*, 13.

<sup>45</sup> Statistics Canada, *Population by year, by province and territory*, <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/101/cst01/demo02a-eng.htm>.

<sup>46</sup> Betts, interview. 13

<sup>47</sup> Betts, e-mail.



of ringette in comparison to hockey almost every time ringette is mentioned in a news story. This is done because people are not familiar with the sport, whereas it is assumed everyone knows the rules of hockey. It is our national sport after all. Grant Crawford, former President of Ringette Canada, has stated that the “biggest threat to ringette is... lack of public awareness and understanding.”<sup>48</sup> People will not follow or participate in sports that they do not know and understand, just as they would not buy a product they are unsure about. They need to be informed in order for participation to occur.

There is also a perception that because ringette is a sport for girls, it is not competitive or physical. This perception hinders the spread of ringette to new participants, especially boys, but girls as well. Why play a “sissy” sport like ringette, when you can play hockey instead? Even the former names of ringette divisions, compared to hockey divisions (even in women’s hockey) seem to have more delicate connotations. The youngest division, Bunnies, brings up images of cute, fluffy, harmless animals, and the older divisions of Petites and Belles do not really connote strength or athleticism. In fact, according to the “Ringette Canada Customer Profile” completed by Tim Berrett, Ph.D. of Caminata Consulting, most players of ringette enjoy it because it is challenging, fun, a good source of fitness and exercise, and competitive.<sup>49</sup> In several newspaper articles the fact that families are often involved in ringette together is often stressed. If the more athletic and competitive aspects of ringette were promoted more, instead of the “delicate” and “family friendly” aspects of the sport, more people would be interested in playing. Recently the ringette division names have been changed to U-19, and U-17, and so on, rather than the

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<sup>48</sup> Robert Tychkowsky, “Ringette vs. hockey,” The Edmonton Sun, April 11, 1998.

<sup>49</sup> Tim Berretta, Ringette Canada Customer Profile, (Edmonton: Caminata Consulting, 2004), 8.

previously more “feminine” names. This change reflects the desire to emphasize athleticism and competitiveness in the sport.

Although encouraging boys to play ringette would increase the number of participants in the ringette community, there has been an ongoing debate about the inclusion of boys on ringette teams. Many young boys play in lower divisions of ringette because they can begin to play ringette before they are able to play hockey. Ringette helps boys develop skating as well as passing skills, which are harder to develop in hockey because the puck can be carried by one player across the whole ice surface.<sup>50</sup> Once boys get older they usually switch to hockey, but some do choose to keep playing ringette.

Some people believe that boys should be able to play ringette in any position, at any level. Others believe that at higher levels boys should only be allowed to play the goalie positions. Still some believe that for the older age groups, boys should not be allowed to play ringette at all. In fact, some ringette leagues have regulations against boys playing on teams; however, some associations do not have any regulations that exclude boys at the local level. In 1997, at the Silver Ring Ringette Tournament in Edmonton, the Sherwood Park Ice played with a male goalie since the team had lost their goalies in the middle of the season, and a Calgary team in the Deb Division also played with a male goalie.<sup>51</sup>

There have been differences in local, provincial, and national rules for allowing boys to play on ringette teams. In 1998, Ringette Canada did not allow male goalies to play at the national level, although they had been allowed to participate in the sport at the provincial levels. The argument for not allowing boys to play in goal, which is a position that involves absolutely

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<sup>50</sup> Derek Van Diest, “Ringette great place to learn,” *The Edmonton Journal*, January 4, 1997.

<sup>51</sup> Robert Tychkowski, “It’s a boy!” *The Edmonton Sun*, January 5, 1997.

no contact so physical strength should not be a factor, is that once boys can play goal they will want to play other positions. As well, if boys were allowed to play goal there would be fewer positions for female goalies, and girls would be pushed out of a sport that was created for them.<sup>52</sup> In 2001, the Silver Ring Ringette Tournament, which takes place in Edmonton each year, allowed mixed teams to play, even allowing boys to play positions other than goalie. No complaints were recorded regarding the mixed teams, and “only one mixed team claimed a gold medal” in the tournament.<sup>53</sup> This event seems to dispute the idea that boys would have an unfair advantage over girls.

There are still no set rules regarding the participation of boys in ringette, other than the fact that boys are not allowed to play at the Canadian Ringette Championships. Generally the rules vary according to age, level, and location. According to the rules of Ringette Alberta today, boys are allowed to play in provincials in teams at the Tween A level ( U 14) and under with up to a maximum of 50% of the team being male. In Junior levels (U-16) and above, decisions on whether or not to allow boys to play in provincials is made on a case by case basis, and this does not apply to AA levels.<sup>54</sup> The rules also state, “boys will be encouraged to play once there are enough participants to form a team/division of their own.”<sup>55</sup> These rules are mostly discussing whether or not to allow boys to play in provincial championships, so whether or not boys can play during the regular season at the local level seems to be left up to local associations. The exclusion of boys from higher level ringette teams may be limiting the growth of ringette in Alberta, and allowing more boys to play may increase the knowledge and appeal of the sport to a

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<sup>52</sup> Robert Tychkowski, “Boy, oh boys!” The Edmonton Sun, April 10, 1998.

<sup>53</sup> Brandice Shostak, “Solid gold weekend for Silver Ring tourney,” The Edmonton Journal, February 12, 2001.

<sup>54</sup> Ringette Alberta, Ringette Alberta Website.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

wider public, but at the same time a balance must be maintained. Ringette was created for women and focus should not be shifted so much that this fact is forgotten.

Another issue surrounding the perception that ringette is on the decline in Alberta is the fact that it is becoming an urban, and more specifically a suburban sport, rather than a rural sport. In recent years, rural teams have been disappearing. Edmonton and Calgary make up two of the eight ringette zones in Alberta, and zone eight no longer has any teams.<sup>56</sup> This shift may be due to increased rink availability in suburban areas, but it most likely related to the fact that more people are moving into the suburban areas of cities for work rather than living in rural areas. It is also expensive to play ringette, so people that would be interested in playing who live in working class communities, or communities that are struggling financially, would not be able to provide the funds it takes to buy equipment and ice time. In households of ringette players, about \$430 is spent on sporting equipment alone each year.<sup>57</sup> Wealthy, prosperous, suburban areas have the resources it takes to fund ringette. On average, the household income of ringette players is about \$74 000 per annum and approximately 41% of ringette players' households have incomes of over \$90 000 dollars per annum.<sup>58</sup>

The fact that there is a large drop-off rate around the teenage years for ringette players is another factor in the perception that ringette is declining in Alberta. According to the *Ringette Canada Customer Profile* about 44.4% of ringette players are aged 11 or under, while only 33.5% of players are between the ages of 12 and 18.<sup>59</sup> Generally, there is an increase of players from U-9 (Bunnies) until the U-14 (Tween) division. At the U-14 level, which includes girls of

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<sup>56</sup> see figure 3

<sup>57</sup> Tim Berretta, *Ringette Canada Customer Profile*, 16.

<sup>58</sup> Tim Berretta, *Ringette Canada Customer Profile*, 16.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

ages 12 and 13, there is a drop in participation and numbers continue to decrease into the U-16 and U-19 (Junior and Belles respectively) divisions. In the 2005-2006 season 788 players were registered in the U-12 (Petites) division, 656 in the U-14 division, and 451 in the U-16 division, yet in the next year looking at the next divisions up (where players would move to if they continued to play) there were only 679 players in the U-14 division (a drop of 109 from U-12 the previous year), 430 in the U-16 division (a drop of 226), and 300 in the U-19 division (a drop of 151).<sup>60</sup>

Where ringette is played there is a variety of other sports available to girls including basketball, volleyball, and hockey to name a few team sports, not to mention the dozens of individual sports also available. It seems that once female ringette players hit the middle teen years, more of them stop playing ringette. This could be due to the fact that school teams at this age become options to these girls. Sports like basketball, volleyball, and hockey offer the possibility of scholarships to schools in Canada and the United States, more so than ringette does. Schools are just beginning to offer scholarships for ringette players, and the University of Alberta is leading the way by offering \$25 000 to its players every year.<sup>61</sup> As more money becomes available, ringette may be more attractive to play for teenage girls. Still, the University of Alberta does not have an official varsity ringette team, and ringette is not included in the Olympics. Other sports have more opportunities for higher level competition. In 1998, women's hockey was added to the Olympics, while ringette was, and still is, excluded from the games, due to a lack of international development in the sport. The same year that women's hockey became an Olympic sport, there were "about three times as many ringette

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<sup>60</sup> Ringette Canada, Ringette Canada Website.

<sup>61</sup> Canadian University Ringette, "About University Ringette," Canadian University Ringette Website, [http://www.canadianuniversityringette.ca/About\\_University\\_Ringette.php](http://www.canadianuniversityringette.ca/About_University_Ringette.php).

players as female hockey players in Canada.”<sup>62</sup> Although more women actually played ringette, hockey was able to take off at least initially because it is a more well known and recognized sport. Ringette simply has not “received nearly the same attention and publicity as ice hockey” Ringette is considered a family sport, and unless a family member plays, most of the public is not familiar with the sport, whereas hockey is readily identifiable and is played by most men in Canada.<sup>63</sup> Neither mothers nor fathers played a generation ago, unlike hockey which most fathers played and mothers are familiar with.

In 1998, Grant Crawford, President of Ringette Canada, stated that he had no problem with the growth of women’s hockey. He believed they are different games and can co-exist together and that anything that gets girls out to arenas, whether it be ringette or hockey, is a “good thing for everybody” Although ringette has been described as more like basketball than hockey, it still competes with hockey simply due to the fact that hockey is another team ice sport.<sup>64</sup> Not only is there competition for ice times between the two sports, but the very things that separate ringette from hockey and are supposed to make it more enticing, such as having no contact, may, in actuality, have a negative influence on bringing players to the sport. Hockey is considered to be a tougher, more exciting sport and is more well known and recognized than ringette is. There is more opportunity for players to play at higher levels in hockey. The University of Alberta has a women’s hockey team as do many universities and colleges in Canada and the United States. This means more scholarships are available to women who play hockey than ringette, and they can play a sport they love while getting an education. If women hockey players are at the top level they even have the chance of going to the Olympics. Ron

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<sup>62</sup> Short, “Ringette growing.”

<sup>63</sup> Margaret Ann Hall, *The Girl and the Game: a History of Women’s Sport in Canada*, (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2002), 191.

<sup>64</sup> Tychowsky, “Ringette vs. hockey.”

Reinhart, a Silver Ring tournament director in 1997, stated that “having hockey in the Olympics is a real concern to [the ringette community].”<sup>65</sup> When women’s hockey is played on the world stage, it gets even more attention and promotion, which ringette loses out on. This encourages girls to play hockey, and lets them know that if they play hockey instead of ringette they can play at higher levels of competition. In the 1992/93 season zone eight in Alberta saw their registration numbers dropping “due to the introduction of girls/ladies hockey” in the area.<sup>66</sup> Although ringette has to compete with all sports open to women, because it is related to hockey, it especially competes with hockey’s popularity.

Even women’s hockey as a sport created for women, and therefore niche sport, struggles, and it is more recognized than ringette. Recently, Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee warned that women’s hockey might be “bounced from the Olympics,” due to a lack of international competitiveness.<sup>67</sup> How can ringette gain popularity and mainstream status if even women’s hockey has difficulty doing so?

Sometimes girls quit playing sports altogether at the age of adolescence. Only 26% of females fifteen and older played sports, compared to 43% of men, in 1998.<sup>68</sup> This can be due in part to body image. “Early in adolescence, girls... are socialized in ways that promote body-hating attitudes, which in turn distort their attitudes towards exercise and sport.”<sup>69</sup> The ideal body of a woman is generally thought to be a slim waist with curves, a body type that is difficult to gain, but even more difficult when you are playing sports at a high level. The ideal bodies of

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<sup>65</sup> Matheson, “Skating Rings.”

<sup>66</sup> Ringette Alberta, *Ringette Alberta: The First Twenty Years*, 14.

<sup>67</sup> MacGregor Roy, “Give women’s hockey a chance to close the gap,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 29, 2010.

<sup>68</sup> Margaret Ann Hall, *The Girl and the Game*, 206.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

athletes are lean and muscular, and muscles are something that people associate with masculinity. There is a stigma “of mannishness, and by extension lesbianism.”<sup>70</sup> Although society is now more tolerant of alternative sexualities, there is still an atmosphere of “dyke bashing” that exists.<sup>71</sup> When adolescent girls are already dealing with body and life changes and fitting in with other girls, it is difficult to also deal with looking different from other girls and dealing with more body issues and stereotypes.

Women also tend to quit playing ringette once they reach the age where they start getting married and having families. “Women’s involvement in physical activity is more likely to take the form of individual fitness activities than organized sport.”<sup>72</sup> Today women lead busy lives that include working outside of the home, taking care of housework and family responsibilities, as well women are more likely to be paid less than men and live in poverty. These factors all contribute to the fact that fewer women participate in sports. They do not have the time to make scheduled games and practices, if they have time for physical activity at all. It is easier to do individual activities that can be fit into any free time one may have.

Ringette Alberta is one of the reasons that ringette participation has grown in Alberta, and it will continue to help develop and grow the sport as they reach out to the age groups and members of the general population who are not as involved in the sport of ringette. Ringette in Alberta was introduced with the understanding that a provincial association was needed to expand the sport. It was at the first introductory clinic in Leduc that a committee was created to organize this provincial association. Within months of the clinic in 1975, the Ringette Alberta

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<sup>70</sup>. Margaret Ann Hall, *The Girl and the Game*, 199.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 206



Working Committee met to view a draft of a constitution and by-laws for what became Ringette Alberta. This committee under Nelson Ball, a volunteer, finalized the application and presented it to the Alberta Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to gain association status. After becoming an association in February 1976, the First Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on April 3. This meeting was attended by 11 communities representatives and “reported that a total of 500 girls were playing the sport in Alberta.”<sup>73</sup>

The AGM meeting also elected its first executive committee. The positions created were, President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and a Past President. These were the members able to cast a vote at meetings dealing with ringette in Alberta. The first official executive meeting was on April 24, 1976. Two positions, “Ringette Alberta Directors”, with the possibility of more, were created to give opportunities to all communities to gain a voice with the provincial association.<sup>74</sup>

Nelson Ball, like Sam Jacks, has become an important figure in the development of Ringette on both a national level and for Alberta. Ball started his ringette career in 1975 at the national level as a part of the committee that organized Ringette Canada. He became the first Vice-President and Government Liaison. His work under Ringette Canada included working with the government to establish federal funding and help launch the first National Ringette Championship 1979 in Winnipeg.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, Nelson Ball was a founding member of Ringette Alberta Association. As a part of the executive committee as President from 1976 to 1978 and continuing as a past president for a final year, Ball was instrumental in the development of ringette for Alberta participants. He was named as an Honourary Member of the Association at the 1982 Annual General Meeting.

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<sup>73</sup> Ringette Alberta, *Ringette Alberta: The First Twenty Years*, (Edmonton, Ringette Alberta, 1996), 6.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>75</sup> Ringette Canada, Ringette Canada Website, <http://www.ringette.ca/Content/Home.asp?langid=1>

Nelson Ball is as an example of committed volunteers to the development of ringette in local associations and at the national level. Volunteers became the coaches, tournament officials and members of Ringette Alberta that helped to develop ringette from its infancy. Though many executive members were given an honorarium, there was no true paid staff of Ringette Alberta until 1987 when a part-timer was hired to work the new computer registration system.

As Ringette Alberta has developed over the years it has become more organized and professional, and as this occurred the association received increased funding from Alberta Sport Council “because the size, scope, and level of development of the program had improved greatly.”<sup>76</sup> In 1994, Ringette Alberta also began the publication, the “Ringleader,” that helped to keep its membership informed about the sport. Ringette Alberta is an association which is democratic and controlled by its members and the volunteer representatives they elect each year at the Annual General Meeting of the association. Any member is able to put in their name to stand for consideration for nomination for a position in the organization, and each member is able to vote on the nominees. In 1994, the Ringette Alberta Board was restructured, to be more efficient so that the board consisted of the Executive Committee, six program directors, eight zone directors, and two full-time office staff.<sup>77</sup> Today, Ringette Alberta is still made up of the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors as well as paid staff. The Executive Committee is made up of the President, Vice-President, and Treasurer, who all act as signing officers and are part of the Board of Directors. In addition to the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors is comprised of the Director of Competitions, the Director of Marketing, the Director of Development, as well as four Directors at Large. Zone Representatives work under the Director

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<sup>76</sup> Ringette Alberta, *Ringette Alberta: The First Twenty Years*, 11.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

of Competitions and “assist with the efficient operation of Ringette programs within one of the eight [ringette] zones” in Alberta.<sup>78</sup> Paid staff of the association includes an Executive Director, a Technical Director, as well as an Office Administrator. The association has a developed business plan and budget and states that the vision of Ringette Alberta is to “be the most innovative and well managed sport association in Canada to make Ringette the number one sport of choice for female athletes.”<sup>79</sup>

Over the years, Ringette Alberta has spread to meet the needs of the ringette community. Although the Association is more formally structured than it was when it was first created, it is still dependent on a strong volunteer base to coach and run the clubs and associations. Through continuation of clinics and schools for officials and coaches, Ringette Alberta is expanding its volunteer base and the understanding of the sport. Certain certification levels have to be met, depending at which level officiating and coaching is occurring, and by 1991, the association required that all tournaments had to be sanctioned.<sup>80</sup> These standards are based on Ringette Canada’s requirements. The use of these educational methods and the events like Provincials have successfully kept up registration numbers and promoted ringette in Alberta. However, ringette still remains a niche sport

At the present time, Ringette Alberta is developing a new website. By updating the organization’s information and making it more accessible to younger people, the organization hopes to increase awareness of the sport among younger, more technologically directed, individuals who may be interested in playing ringette. According to the “Ringette Canada

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<sup>78</sup> Ringette Alberta, Ringette Alberta Website, <http://www.ringettealberta.com/>.

<sup>79</sup> Ringette Alberta, Ringette Alberta Website

<sup>80</sup> Ringette Alberta, Ringette Alberta: The First Twenty Years, 12.

Customer Profile,” 98% of current ringette players in Canada have access to the Internet and World Wide Web.<sup>81</sup> The study also concludes that communication with ringette players can be accomplished through the Internet, and that this mode of communication “should be phased in over time to allow for players, coaches, officials, etc.” to get used to the new system of information distribution.<sup>82</sup> Ringette Alberta will benefit from a more informational and user friendly website.

Ringette Alberta is also looking into developing an official alumni association, and a Ringette Alberta Alumni Association (RAAA) webpage will be a part of Ringette Alberta’s new website. Although many groups have alumni, it does not seem that it is common in the amateur sports world to have an official and organized alumni association. RAAA would be composed of all former Ringette Alberta members, players, officials, volunteers etc. The alumni association would be self-sustaining and hopefully self-directing through a committee or board of alumni members. RAAA would be a part of Ringette Alberta and would be supported by the association until it sustains itself.

Ringette Alberta hopes that the alumni association will help the sport of ringette to continue to grow and develop in Alberta. A ringette alumni association would work with Ringette Alberta and help current participants in the sport, as well as promote the sport and help it to grow. Alumni would be able to stay connected with and involved in the sport through RAAA, specifically through newsletters and the future website. More former players may come back to play adult ringette, as well as volunteer to coach and develop current ringette players, and help out with ringette tournaments, if they are well informed about the need for volunteers

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<sup>81</sup> Berretta, Ringette Canada Customer Profile, 7.

<sup>82</sup> Berretta, Ringette Canada Customer Profile, 7.

and how to get involved. An alumni association would also help promote and market ringette, through events and fundraisers, such as a ringette lecture series, and camps run by alumni.

Alumni associations create networks of support for its members as well as current participants in ringette. The University of Alberta Alumni Association offers its members various benefits including deals on home and auto insurance, life and health insurance, and no fee credit cards.<sup>83</sup>

Benefits for the Ringette Alberta Alumni members could include credit cards just like the University Alumni are offered, as well as discounts at a variety of participating businesses such as sporting goods stores, and health food stores.

The University of Alberta Alumni also help support the University through donations. In 2008, during a major fundraising campaign of the University of Alberta, \$581.7 million was raised. “Approximately 90 000 donors from 81 countries contributed to Campaign 2008, with about 40 per cent support coming from individuals—mostly University of Alberta alumni.”<sup>84</sup>

One way Ringette Alberta could utilize an alumni association is to support current players of ringette through scholarships supplied by individual alumnus or through scholarships given through the entire alumni association. Through the alumni association, all members of the ringette community, and the sport itself, can benefit.

Ringette has had a rich and successful history in Alberta and is continuing to grow and develop. Sam Jacks and his associates in the 1960’s saw a need for a women’s sport that could capture the attention of female participants. From the beginnings in Ontario to the spread out west, ringette has shown that it is the combination of the organization, promotion, dedication of the volunteers and enjoyment of the players that make a sport grow. While it has expanded in

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<sup>83</sup> The University of Alberta, Alumni and Donors, <http://www.alumni.ualberta.ca/AlumniAssociation.aspx>.

<sup>84</sup> Jennifer Huygen, “Campaign ‘08 passes ambitions,” *The Gateway*, April 1, 2009.

participation numbers, ringette remains a niche sport. Ringette may never become a widespread, mainstream sport on the level of volleyball, basketball and even women's hockey, but that does not mean it cannot continue to thrive and grow as a enjoyable sport.

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Ringette Alberta Logo



Figure 1. Image from the Ringette Alberta website.

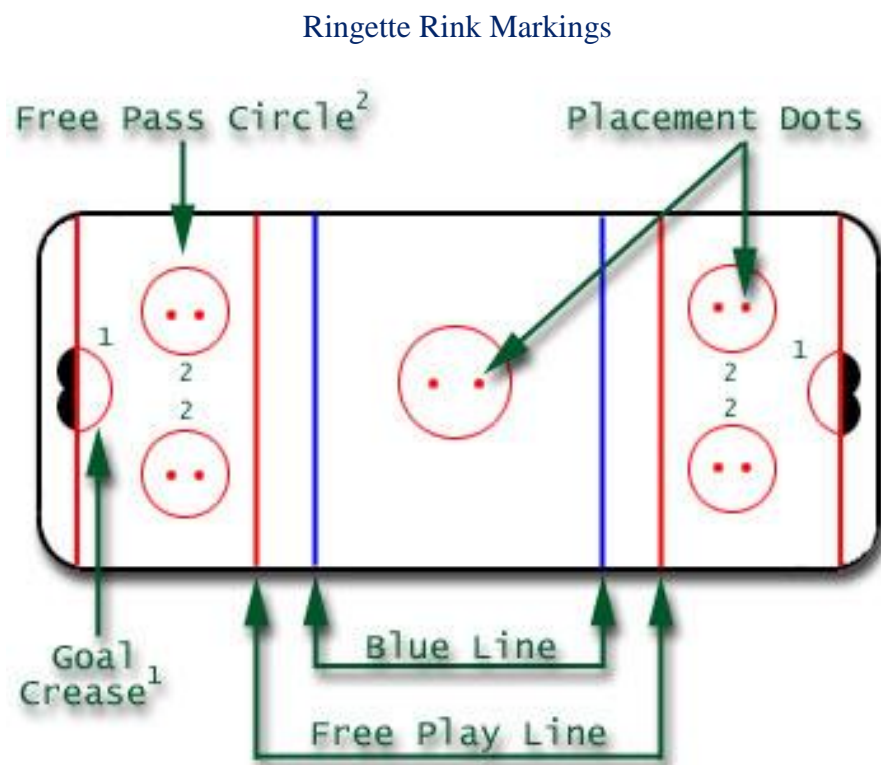


Figure 2. Image from Medicine Hat Ringette website.

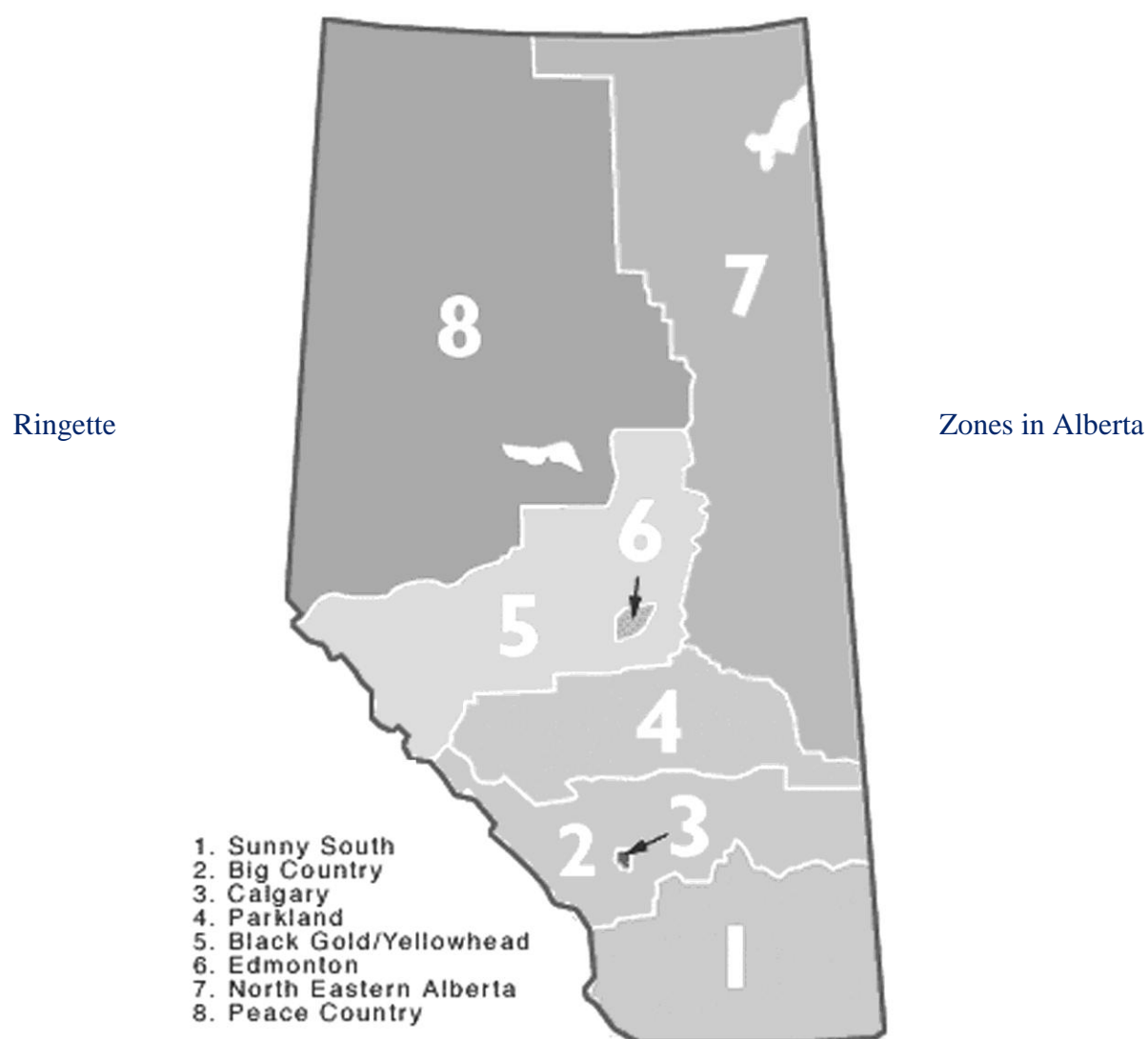


Figure 3. Image from Ringette Alberta website.

	<b>Bunnies</b>	<b>Novice</b>	<b>Petites</b>	<b>Tweens</b>	<b>Jr. Belles</b>	<b>Junior</b>	<b>Belles</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Deb</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Mens'</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1978-1979</b>	0	0	167	197	134	N/A	137	0	0	0	0	635
<b>1979-1980</b>	0	0	0	0	43	N/A	66	0	11	0	0	120
<b>1980-1981</b>	0	0	0	0	64	N/A	68	0	12	0	0	144
<b>1981-1982</b>	0	0	416	376	276	N/A	165	154	41	0	0	1428
<b>1982-1983</b>	5	0	505	453	342	N/A	239	32	67	0	0	1643
<b>1983-1984</b>	13	0	645	558	473	N/A	253	94	54	0	0	2090
<b>1984-1985</b>	195	0	636	628	463	N/A	309	170	84	0	0	2485

<b>1985-1986</b>	295	0	829	875	573	N/A	408	27	78	0	0	3085
<b>1986-1987</b>	265	496	913	788	N/A	410	256	143	62	0	0	3333
<b>1987-1988</b>	242	547	975	839	N/A	501	237	18	112	0	0	3471
<b>1988-1989</b>	281	577	820	852	N/A	558	175	54	151	0	0	3468
<b>1989-1990</b>	286	537	810	732	N/A	535	263	25	230	0	0	3418
<b>1990-1991</b>	314	541	763	753	N/A	539	240	95	226	0	0	3471
<b>1991-1992</b>	415	625	760	756	N/A	506	412	180	226	0	0	3920
<b>1992-1993</b>	335	639	805	717	N/A	541	353	441	175	135	0	4141
<b>1993-1994</b>	300	700	842	774	N/A	712	312	450	182	154	0	4426
<b>1994-1995</b>	339	573	970	760	N/A	416	299	221	443	177	0	4198
<b>1995-1996</b>	328	598	840	712	N/A	568	261	136	195	442	0	4080
<b>1996-1997</b>	359	576	808	697	N/A	494	299	161	186	549	55	4184
<b>1997-1998</b>	352	629	719	721	N/A	486	362	223	146	565	46	4249
<b>1998-1999</b>	396	542	761	710	N/A	441	332	206	117	693	51	4249
<b>1999-2000</b>	435	647	749	599	N/A	465	337	271	163	643	65	4374
<b>2000-2001</b>	493	678	642	664	N/A	402	315	232	136	725	101	4388
<b>2001-2002</b>	512	657	713	644	N/A	360	287	265	131	711	114	4394
<b>2002-2003</b>	511	710	701	585	N/A	440	325	230	147	740	74	4463
<b>2003-2004</b>	514	739	770	595	N/A	476	298	272	164	723	78	4629
<b>2004-2005</b>	602	719	816	592	N/A	449	332	49	95	844	80	4578
<b>2005-2006</b>	650	710	788	656	N/A	451	344	860	N/A	191	102	4752
<b>2006-2007</b>	695	776	873	679	N/A	430	300	882	N/A	186	119	4940
<b>2007-2008</b>	689	822	800	674	N/A	515	314	961	0	190	85	5050

#### Ringette Alberta Registration Numbers by Year and Division

Figure 4. Chart based on statistics from Ringette Canada.