

Masters Report - 2007-2008 Season

Ottawa Pacers

Submitted by: Alicia Weiss

It was another season of record registration numbers for the Masters. The group is definitely ready to grow to accommodate skaters who are becoming more competitive and to allow for new skaters to join us.

In August, a dedicated group attended Mike Rivet's first Masters Dryland Camp at Mont Ste Marie, styled after the popular youth camp. Feedback was excellent and we look forward to a second year in Summer '08.

December brought another successful annual trek to Lake Placid. It was a bit whiter than usual, as the region was hit by quite a blizzard, but we skated anyways.

Long track season started with a stellar camp coached by Mike Rivet and attended by more than 30 Masters, most from Ottawa. The long track season itself didn't see the same participation, but weather and lack of a major event for a goal were likely big factors.

Unfortunately the Bytown Masters Long Track Meet was melted out for a third year running. Because of both weather and scheduling challenges, we will try moving the 2009 Meet to February.

A half dozen of the group traveled to Lakefield, ON for the Lakefield Oval's inaugural event - a Masters all around competition - but unfortunately weather worked against us and melted us out. We did skate an unofficial race on Sunday, thus participating in Lakefield's inaugural event.

The marathon season also faced many challenges because of the weather. But the local races did go on. Participation at the Portland marathon events was excellent, if not in the 50k, the relay saw a battle of the sexes, which was highly entertaining. The Ottawa races, hosted by Jake Maarse and the MSI organization, took place the first weekend in March. Attendance was excellent, and the one-hour challenge on Sunday morning proved a popular format. And great thanks to Pete Gauthier and his volunteers for maintaining the ice long enough for the event to happen!

Short track season saw some real speed picking up. It was exciting to see the Pacers hosting Masters Provincials. Despite being Easter weekend, it brought out more than 40 Masters, 8 from Ottawa including Shannon Rampton who unofficially set a provincial record for Masters 2 Women.

Our biggest challenge this past year was most likely the traffic on the ice, made more apparent by the diverse speeds. With the increasing volume of skaters, the crashes appear to be increasing as well. It will be increasingly important for the coaches to manage the traffic flow.

I would like to thank Gavin for all his work as our short track head coach and to Mike Rivet, for leading the long track coaching. I would also recognize the ongoing commitment of Iain McCallum, John Cox, Andrew McCallum, Grant Edgar and Mike Rivet for their help on the short track ice, and to our newest assistant, Brad Ardley. All their help is most appreciated.

I also thank two organizations who contributed prizes for the Masters Meet: CBC and Lixar Website Development.

Thanks to all the Masters who gave of their time to help with the Brewer Committee (especially Tom Simper and Sheila McGinn), officiating, coaching and general volunteering with the club. It's an excellent group and their dedication to the club and sport shows

Thanks to all for another season!
Alicia